













Amos Pillsbury

A  
HISTORY  
OF  
NEWGATE OF CONNECTICUT,  
AT  
SIMSBURY, NOW EAST GRANBY;  
ITS  
INSURRECTIONS AND MASSACRES,  
THE  
IMPRISONMENT OF THE TORIES IN THE REVOLUTION,  
AND THE WORKING OF ITS MINES.  
ALSO,  
SOME ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
STATE PRISON AT WETHERSFIELD.

BY RICHARD H. <sup>Worcester</sup> PHELPS.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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**W**HATEVER relates to the early history of a Locality or People, illustrating the manners, the civil, religious or criminal policy thereof, is undoubtedly worthy of preservation. The records of deeds and events, apparently of slight moment at the time of their occurrence, increase in importance as ages roll away, and are the indices by which we estimate the truth of history. It is therefore needless to dwell upon the necessity of recording events in their day, lest the memory of them be destroyed by the tooth of time, or they lapse into tales and traditions.

There is an exciting fascination in the eventful history of *Newgate of Connecticut*, to all who have been familiar with it, more especially to those who, like the writer, have resided in its vicinity and witnessed many of its scenes; and if we may judge by the numbers that travel far to

explore its caverns and the works which now cover its grounds, it will long continue to be an object of interest and examination. When the aged residents in its vicinity are gone, which must soon be, this prison fortress will doubtless remain. The traveler will inquire, Who built these towers? Why these iron grates, these trenches and walls? How came these huge caverns to be dug out of solid rock, and why these rings and fetters bolted to their massive sides? Surely the echo of the caverns can not answer, nor the people who lived coterminous with their use. Enough, then, by way of apology for these sketches.

The materials here presented, have been gathered from a variety of sources. Besides what came within the knowledge of the writer, he has availed himself of the statistics afforded by the ancient colonial and state records; of the facts recorded in the *History of Simsbury*, by N. A. PHELPS, Esq.; of the verbal statements kindly furnished by aged persons still living; and a multitude of facts, preserved from the recorded relations of witnesses long since passed away; all of which may be relied upon for entire accuracy.

*Windsor, Ct., 1860.*





## NEWGATE OF CONNECTICUT.

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**T**HIS is the name by which the prison was known in the time of the American Revolution, and it was so called after Newgate prison in England. It is well known that our forefathers, in giving names to their towns and rivers, and other objects of nature and art, by which they became surrounded, drew freely upon those which they had been accustomed to in their ancestral homes ; thus they endeavored to make their adopted country, in names at least, to assimilate to their native land. So, in denominating this receptacle for their criminals after the world-renowned prison of London, they intended to endow it with all the terror which attached to that fearful abode of the depraved.



The mines and prison buildings occupy an eminence on the western declivity of the greenstone mountain, which rises to an elevation higher than at any other place in the state, and is here surmounted by lofty, precipitous and craggy rocks. This range of mountains extends through the whole length of the state, and terminates at the East Rock near New Haven. Towards the west and south, can be seen in the distance, bold and irregular outlines of mountains, interspersed with extensive valleys, forming a scene of impressive grandeur and sublimity, seldom surpassed. Says a writer:

“The appearance of this place forcibly reminds  
“the observer of the walls, castles, and towers,  
“erected for the security of some haughty lordling  
“of the feudal ages; while the gloomy dungeons  
“within its walls, call to remembrance a Bastile,  
“or a prison of the Inquisition.”

The mines were formerly included in the limits of the town of Simsbury, and so remained until 1786, when a part of the town, including mines and prisons, was set off and incorporated under the name of *Granby*; hence the place was at that time known by the name of *Simsbury Copper Mines*, on Copper hill.

The town of Granby was subdivided in 1858, and the mines are at present included in the town of East Granby. If the state of Connecticut continues henceforth to increase her legislative ratio of representation by subdividing her towns, it will become difficult to trace the topography of some places within her borders, nor can it well be foreseen what town will have the honor of containing Simsbury mines at the next subdivision.

#### MINING.

The period at which copper ore was first discovered at this place is not definitely known. The first company for working the mines, is supposed to have been composed of land proprietors of Simsbury, in 1707. The association agreed to pay the town ten shillings on each ton of copper produced, of which two-thirds was appropriated for the support "of an able schoolmaster in Simsbury," and the other third to the collegiate school, Yale college; the residue of profits was to be divided among the partners pro-rata, according to the amount of their respective subscription shares.

All the land on Copper hill, and in that region, was covered with the primeval forest, and occupied only as hunting ground by roving bands of Indians;

and as the land was unsold, and under the control of the original proprietors of the town, the association comprised chiefly all the inhabitants. The company concluded only to dig the ore, and the first year they made a contract with three clergymen, for smelting the same, viz: *John Woodbridge* of Springfield, *Dudley Woodbridge* of Simsbury, and *Timothy Woodbridge, Jr.*, of Hartford.

Clergymen at that early period were regarded as the principal embodiments of science as well as theology, and as many of them received their education in England, these contractors were supposed to possess the best facilities for obtaining information from foreign sources, in regard to the difficult process of smelting and refining. The theologians, however, did not understand the business, or at least failed to prosecute it to advantage; for in four years from their commencement, the proprietors appointed a committee to call them to account, and, if necessary, to sue them for the ore "that had been brought to them at divers times." The mines had at that time attained a good degree of celebrity, as appears by a public act passed by the colony.

“ Anno Regni ANNÆ Reginae  
V. Septimo A. D. 1709.”

*An Act relating to the Copper Mines at Simsbury.*

“Whereas there hath lately been discovered a  
“Copper mine at Symsbury, which hath been so  
“improved as to give good satisfaction to conclude  
“that a public benefit might arise therefrom; Now  
“for the better encouraging, directing, and ena-  
“bling the proprietors and undertakers, or others  
“that are or may be concerned therein, their heirs  
“and assigns, to manage, carry on, and improve  
“said mines to the best advantage,” &c.

The act authorized the appointment of three commissioners, who were to settle all controversies, and who were authorized to summon a jury in disputes exceeding a certain amount. The sessions of this court were held generally at or near the mines, and great numbers of business and litigated cases, were adjusted in a summary and economical way, for the space of more than sixty years. During that whole period, the company of proprietors worked the mines, either themselves, or by leasing to other parties, who agreed to pay the company a per centage of the ore or metal produced. In their leases it was expressly stipulated, that one-fifth of all metals, &c., should go to the

*crown* ; thus, acknowledging themselves most loyal subjects of taxation and revenue to the crown of England.

It is not ascertained what per cent of profits was made on the investment in these mines, over and above the expenses of working them, but it is natural to suppose that if they were very profitable to the operators, all the applause usually attendant upon good luck, would not have remained forever hidden in oblivion from the world. Still the illusive charms of mining, had so much of novelty and hope for adventurers in the New world, that new companies were formed successively at various periods.

Some of the companies were composed of persons of great wealth and respectability. One company was formed in London, one in Holland, others in Boston, New York, and elsewhere. In 1714, the records show that the use of the mines was purchased by *Jonathan Belcher* of Boston, (afterwards governor), *Timothy Woodbridge, Jr.*, and *Wm. Partridge* ; and in 1721 they had miners from Germany employed, and were expending seventy pounds a month in the work. It appears that this Boston company operated the mines for a period of at least twenty-three years, and in a letter from Governor *Belcher*, dated 1735, he states that he had



disbursed upwards of 15,000 pounds, or about 75,000 dollars.

The excitement in the Colonies upon the business of mining, about that period, was very great, as it would seem from the following petition, copied from the records:

*“To the Honnell, the Gov'r Council and Representatives in general Court assembled in New Haven, Oct. 16th A. D. 1733.*

*“The Prayer of Joseph Whiting, of New Haven, Humbly Sheweth; That your Suppliant has Expended a considerable time & money in Searching after Mines, & has made farther Discoveries perhaps than any other man in this Colony has before done, and having met with such incouragement as that I am willing to be at farther Expense in the Same Search—but ready money being so absolutely necessary therein; I therefore Humbly pray this assembly will be pleased to lease me one thousand pounds of the money Granted last may to be struck, & now to be disposed of by this assembly—upon double security in Lands & Bonds, for the payment of the interest every year; the principall to be Returned at the Expiration of ten years,” &c.*

*Joseph Whiting.”*

A great deal of time and money without doubt was expended as the aforesaid petitioner says "*in searching after mines,*" for the evidence may be seen in the numerous pits and shafts which have been dug along the whole range of this mountain to New Haven. At that day, as in all previous time since the world began, and as is seen especially at the present day, the chief aim of many appeared to be to make fortunes by head-work—by speculation, and choosing rather to spend their time and risk their money in mining, and other uncertain projects, than to dig upon the *surface* of good old mother earth, for a *sure* and *honest living*.

Upon the summit of the hill where the greatest excavations were made, and the largest quantity of ore taken, two perpendicular shafts were dug principally through solid rock, for the purpose of raising the ore. One of them is nearly eighty feet deep, and the other thirty five. At the bottom of these shafts we find the *caverns*, so termed, extending in various directions, several hundred feet.

By estimating the once solid contents of these subterraneous vaults, an idea can be formed of the great quantity of ore which has been taken out. The percolation of water through the crevices of rock, made it necessary to dig drains or *levels*, to



convey it off; but these either became obstructed, or the mines were sunk below them, which allowed the accumulation of water, and it became necessary to pump it out. The pumps were kept in motion day and night, and laborers in the vicinity, and farmers in the town of Windsor, were employed to work them during the night, and return to their homes in the morning. The copper ore has somewhat the appearance of yellowish grey sand stone, intermixed with nodules of bluish sulphuret, and yellow pyrites, and is very hard and brittle.

The vein is considered as rich, yielding three to five per cent of pure copper, and some large masses have been obtained yielding over fifty per cent. The ore is of a character termed *refractory*, and the metal does not readily separate from the stone when pulverised and washed, in consequence of the specific gravity of the stony particles.

The mines would doubtless have been profitable to the operators at the price at which copper metal was at that time valued, had not the enterprise been shackled with various incumbrances. A principal one was, the laws of the mother country prohibiting the smelting of it here. The rigid laws of Britain imposed penalties upon any who should attempt to compete with her furnaces and

artizans at home, consequently the vast expense of shipping it across the Atlantic, crippled the success of all parties engaged in the business. Notwithstanding the enormous expense, several cargoes were sent to Europe. A large quantity was deposited about one mile east of the mountain, upon a spot now marked by an entire dearth of vegetation, owing to the poisonous qualities extracted from the ore. From thence it was carried fourteen miles to Hartford, where it was shipped to New York, and from thence to England. The owners were still further disheartened by the loss of two vessels with their cargoes of ore. One was seized and confiscated as a prize by the French, being then at war with England; the other was sunk in the English channel by shipwreck.

In defiance of British restrictions, considerable ore was smelted by the companies. Buildings and furnaces for pounding, smelting, and refining, were erected in Simsbury upon a stream of water a few miles distant, but safety required caution and secrecy in the works, which were finally abandoned. The place where the smelting was carried on, was named by the German workmen, *Hanover*, from their native place in Germany, which name it still retains.

## GRANBY COPPERS.

Coin was made from this ore in 1737 and 1739, by a Mr. Higley, and was in current circulation for many years. In describing these coins, a writer says: "They were stamped upon planchets of the purest copper, and, in consequence, were in demand by goldsmiths for alloy." The trade of a blacksmith, ever since Vulcan was engaged in forging thunderbolts, has given to the world some very remarkable men, and it affords us great pleasure at this time to be able to contribute to the fame of one of the craft, who not only devised, but manufactured a currency. We have seen it stated that Mr. Higley, the author of these coppers, was an ingenious blacksmith who resided in the town of Granby; hence the name *Granby Coppers*; and that with all the notions of utility which he naturally derived from the anvil, he was ambitious of making a little reputation for himself besides. He has certainly left evidence of having been an artist as well as a financier, for the creations of his genius and skill were for the times well executed, and they also became a currency. Subsequently, we are informed, his cupidity led him into the hazardous experiment of illegally imitating the issues of

other coiners, which, being discovered, deprived him of a portion of the laurels that had previously encircled his brow. These coppers bear the symbols of their origin, with a due regard to royalty on some of them—the sledge-hammers being surmounted by crowns, a something very apparent to the minds of the colonists, but which did not always command their sincere reverence. These coins grace but few cabinets, having been generally so impaired by wear, from being stamped upon unalloyed copper, as to be rarely found sufficiently perfect. We were, however, lately gratified by finding in New York city an electrotype which was perfect. Single specimens of this coin now command from \$15 to \$25 each. There appears to have been five different issues of them, of several devices; upon one is the figure of a broad axe, with the motto: "*I cut my way through!*"



Obverse.



Reverse.

The engraving represents both sides of a Granby

copper, now in the Connecticut Historical Society, at Hartford.

No public laws had been made by the colonists to authorize coinage of money, or to specify its value. Specie was very scarce in this country, and the coinage at this embryo mint, was regarded with great favor by residents in the vicinity. The foreign trade of the country, which was chiefly confined to England, was principally controlled by her; the balance of trade was continually against us, which prevented the importation of specie. The war with France, in 1745, turned the tide somewhat in our favor, and considerable quantities were circulated by England in payment of war expenses.

The first issue of paper money was made by the Colonists in 1709, being the same year in which a public act was passed relating to the Simsbury mines. Previous to that time *Provision pay* was the common medium of exchange, consisting of the common eatables and other products of the country. The appraised value of such commodities at that time, may be shown by the following extract from the records of the town of Simsbury, stipulating the pay of their clergyman in 1688. They agreed to pay him fifty pounds per annum



“in good current pay, to wit; one third in good  
“merchantable wheat at four shillings per bushel,  
“one third in pease or rye, at three shillings per  
“bushel, and one third in Indian corn or pork; the  
“corn at two shillings and six pence per bushel,  
“and the pork at three pounds ten shillings per bar-  
“rel,” besides other items of fuel, &c. At an ordi-  
nation nine years later, among the articles furnish-  
ed on the occasion were the following, with their  
prices; Half a lamb of mutton, 2s. 6d.; butter 6d.  
per pound; four pounds of sugar, 2s. 6d.; half a  
bushel Indian meal, 1s. 3d.; two fowls, 8d.; eighty-  
four pounds of beef, 15s.; thirty pounds venison,  
3s. 9d.; nineteen pounds of pork, 4s. 9d.; nine  
pounds of mutton, 2s.; two gills of rum, 9d. Valued  
by our currency at this day the price of beef was  
*three cents* a pound; mutton *three and a half cents*,  
and venison *two cents*. In some instances it was  
stipulated that those who paid their rates in specie,  
should be allowed a discount of one third from the  
amount. Contracts between individuals unless  
specially stipulated to be paid in coin, were pay-  
able in the commodities of the neighborhood, and  
at prices established by the General court. Taxes  
laid for military defence against the roving tribes  
of Indians, for building churches, and for ordinary

public expenses, were also payable in produce. During a period of one hundred and forty eight years from the settlement of the colony to the peace of 1783, excepting the period of the French wars, the traffic among the people was carried on in part by barter and exchange. In 1709 it was enacted by the Colony, that in order to assist in the expedition against the French in Canada, "there be forthwith imprinted a certain number of "Bills of Credit, on the Colony, in suitable sums "from two shillings to five pounds, which in the "whole shall amount to 8,000 pounds, and no "more."

It was enacted that the bills should be received for dues and taxes, at one shilling on the pound *better* than money. Taxes were imposed providing for the redemption of the whole amount within two years. The promptness with which the Colony met their own bills, is noticeable when contrasted with the unavailing efforts of the Continental Congress, to sustain the value of their paper money, which was issued in the Revolution.\*

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\* To illustrate the ruinous depreciation of the Continental currency, I quote an extract from a letter written by *Hezekiah Munsell* of East Windsor. He says: "In 1781 in the months "of Feb'y or March, I drove a "team to Boston with a load, "and brought one back for a "merchant in Springfield, Mass.



## SLAVERY.

The customs of the colony for many years tolerated African slavery, and slaves were employed to some extent in laboring at the mines. It is very likely they may have been imported for that purpose by some of the foreign companies who leased the mines; this opinion is justified by the fact that slaves were imported into the American colonies at various periods by English traders, as the slave trade was not prohibited in England until 1807. The area of slavery in Connecticut must have been of considerable extent, for the territory granted by the Plymouth Company of England in 1630, comprised the whole country from the Atlantic ocean to the South sea, or Pacific, and of the present width of the state from north to south. The first record of slavery in Connecticut, was in an inventory of the property of *Henry Wolcott* of Windsor in 1680, though it may have been brought into the town by the first settlers in 1633..

In 1660, by a decree of the General court,

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<p>"I had a five cattle team. Re-          "turning home I stayed in Rox-          "bury one night; my team was          "fed, I had one meal and lodg-          "ing; my bill in the morning</p>	<p>"was two silver dollars, and          "continental money had so de-          "preciated that I paid it in the          "round sum of \$140 for that          "single night's entertainment."</p>
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“neither *Indian nor negar* servants shall be required “to train, watch, or ward.” Indian enemies captured in war, or convicted of crimes, were sold and held in bondage as slaves.

The thought will readily occur to the mind, that our respected ancestors occupied rather a contrariety of position in this particular, as they had fled from oppression in the old world, and felt themselves justified in enslaving the aborigines of the new.

The record of burials in South Windsor gives the deaths of twenty-one negro slaves between 1736, and 1768. In 1784 the Legislature enacted that no negro child born after the first day of March in that year, should be held in bondage after arriving at the age of twenty-five. 1784 an act was passed that children born of slave mothers after August in that year, should be free at the age of twenty one ; but it does not appear that slavery was totally abolished by a formal act until 1848.

The following anecdote, copied from the History of Ancient Windsor, by *Dr. Stiles*, illustrates some of the difficulties encountered by our people in the liberation of their slaves, and also by our Southern brethren, where, in all their state laws they are obligated to provide for the support of those who are infirm and unable to labor :

“An aged and faithful Windsor slave working  
“in the field with his master, was observed to be  
“very moody and silent. At length he broke the  
“silence by saying, that such a neighbor had given  
“his slave his freedom, and modestly suggested  
“that Massa ort to give *me* freedom. The master  
“quietly replied, Well, Tom, you may have your  
“freedom. May I, Massa—when? *Now*, was the  
“reply. What, now, Massa, right away! ex-  
“claimed the surprised slave. Yes, Tom, you  
“may stick up your fork where you are, if you  
“choose and be free. Tom stood looking upon  
“the ground more moodily than ever, while his  
“master went on with his work. After half an  
“hour’s consideration, Tom resumed his labor,  
“remarking, with a knowing look, No, Massa, you  
“have de meat, now you may pick de bone. I no  
“go and take care old Tom myself.”

## RECENT MINING.

The work at the Simsbury mines was carried on at various periods until 1773, more than seventy years, through wars and rumors of wars, and by a variety of forces ; by free labor, and by slave labor ; by private enterprise, and by chartered companies ; and, subsequently, by prison labor. Vast sums had been expended in the business, and then they were abandoned for the space of about half a century, for prison occupation.

In 1830, to the surprise of all, another resurrection of mineralogists was announced at the old prison mines. A company of gentlemen from New York, with *Richard Bacon* of Simsbury, formed the *Phenix Mining Company*, obtained a charter, and purchased of the state the whole prison property, including the mines, and about five acres of land, for the sum of \$1,200. They expended many thousand dollars in digging extensive levels, building furnaces, and constructing engines and machinery, to facilitate their operations in raising, pounding, and smelting the ore. They carried on the business for some time, but owing to a reverse in financial affairs of the country and other causes, they were again abandoned.

The old mines were suffered to repose again in quiet for about twenty years, when the note of preparation for working was once more heard. A new company was formed in 1855, called the *Connecticut Copper Company*, which prosecuted the business for about two years. They found the average yield of metal about 5 per cent, and large masses of ore were taken out which produced over 50 per cent of copper. The deeper the descent, the richer appeared to be the quality of the ore. The chief obstacle to success appears to be, not for the lack of a fair per centage of metal, but in extracting it by the ordinary process of separating and fluxing; and for that purpose the company erected ten of Bradford's separators, at a great expense, and also two steam engines for grinding, and for working the separating machines. The business has been suspended for the present, but it is believed that the aids of science, improved machinery, and sufficient capital, will yet result profitably, and that Copper hill may at no distant day, share some of the fame of the mines of lake Superior.



IMPRISONMENT OF THE TORIES.

Can then the verdure of these blissful plains  
 Conceal the *Caves* where penal Rigor reigns !  
 Where the starved wretch, by suffering folly led  
 To snatch the feast where pampered plenty fed;  
 Shut from the sunny breeze and healthful skies,  
 On the cold, dripping stone, low, withering, lies;  
 Torn from the clime that gave his visions birth,  
 A palsied member of the vital earth!  
 If the sweet Muse, with Nature's best control,  
 Can melt to sympathy the reasoning soul,  
 She bids thee rend those *grating bars* away,  
 And o'er the dungeon break the beam of day:  
 Give the frail felon with laborious toil,  
 To pay the penance of his wasted spoil.  
 Hear his deep groan, heed his repentant prayer,  
 And snatch his frenzied spirit from despair;  
 Nor let these fields, arrayed in heavenly bloom,  
 Blush o'er the horrors of a *living tomb* !\*

These caverns were first occupied as a place for the confinement of Tories about the beginning of the American Revolution. What an astonishing train of events followed, and how distant from the thoughts of the British company of miners, the

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\* Extract from a poem written by a lady of Boston, in 1797, after visiting the prison. It indicates the great notoriety and formidable character which Newgate had obtained, in the opinion of the benevolent and gifted poetess.

idea that they were actually hewing out prison cells, for the lodgment of their friends, the Tories of America !

The Colony of Connecticut first used the caverns as a permanent prison in 1773. A committee had been appointed by the General assembly to explore the place, who reported that by expending about thirty-seven pounds, the mines could be so perfectly secured, that "it would be next to impossible for any person to escape." Whether their opinions were well founded, subsequent events determined. The total expense of purchasing the property, with the remaining lease of the mines, and fortifying the place, amounted to \$375.

An act was passed prescribing the terms of imprisonment. Burglary, robbery, and counterfeiting were punished for the first offense with imprisonment not exceeding ten years ; second offense for life. The keeper of the prison was authorized to punish the convicts for offenses, by "moderate whipping, not exceeding ten stripes, and by putting shackles and fetters upon them ;" and it was intended to employ them at labor in the mines, which they did, to a considerable extent.

At first the number of Tories confined in the caverns did not exceed five or six, and these were



guilty of other crimes against the government. But as time developed events, the numbers increased to between thirty and forty.

When the 342 chests of tea were thrown into the sea at Boston in 1773, and that port closed by an act of Parliament, so great was the excitement, and so indignant were the people, particularly in Massachusetts and Connecticut, on account of British oppression, that the use of tea and all commodities imported in British vessels and subject to duty, were prohibited. The duty on tea was so particularly obnoxious, that it was considered a contraband article in household comforts; true, the contrast in the times may appear rather curious, for at this day, a housekeeper would be judged by common consent deserving incarceration in the mines, or some other place, for *not* allowing the article to be used.

Our ancestors knew no half-way policy, and seldom adopted dilatory measures to carry their points. Tea vessels, if then kept at all, were kept out of sight; tea pots were run into musket balls, and they were the kind of currency with which the people dealt with old England.

The following incident from Dr. *Stiles's* History of Ancient Windsor, shows the marked spirit of the times:

“At an early period in the Revolutionary struggle, and before the war had fairly commenced, some of the Tories (of whom there were a few in Windsor) happened one day to come across *Elihu Drake*, then a lad about eight years old, and partly in earnest, and partly in a joke, endeavored to compel him to say, *God save the King*. Failing of success, they tried to intimidate him by threatening him with a ducking in the river. But the boy still stoutly refused. Becoming somewhat enraged at the young rebel, they carried their threat into execution, and thrust him under water, but as they pulled him out spluttering and choking, the only exclamation which he uttered was a fervent *God d—n the King*. Again, and again was the little martyr thrust under, but each time the same reply was all they could extort from him, and they were obliged to release him with many hearty curses for his stubbornness. At the age of twelve, this young hero accompanied his father into the war, in the capacity of waiter.”

The following appeared in the Connecticut Journal, in 1775, and further illustrates the same spirit:

“The Riflemen on their way from the Southern colonies through the country, administer the new fashioned discipline of tar and feathers to the obstinate and refractory *Tories* that they met on their road, which has had a very good effect here (in New Milford). Those whose crimes are of a more atrocious nature, they punish by sending them to Gen. Gage. They took a man in this town, a most incorrigible Tory, who called them d—d Rebels, &c., and made him walk before them to Litchfield, which is 20 miles, and carry one of his own geese all the way in his hand; when they arrived there, they tarred him, and made him pluck his goose, and then bestowed the feathers on him, drummed him out of the company, and obliged him to kneel down and thank them for their lenity.”

Public opinion in some of the colonies against those who favored the mother country was very rigid, authorizing any person even to shoot them if they were found beyond the limits of their own premises, and one was shot in the town of Simsbury. Those who possessed not the hardihood

thus summarily to dispatch a neighbor when he declined to fight for the country, or for purchasing foreign goods, adopted the more humane expedient of applying to the Committee of Safety\* in the town, who penned them up in the caverns where they could at least leisurely examine the evidence of British labor, though not allowed the blessed

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\* In some towns they were termed Committee of Inspection. They constituted what we should call a committee of Vigilance, and their duties were of a very peculiar and delicate nature—"a patriotic and searching espionage into the principles, actions and private affairs of every member of the community, without regard to station, profession or character. It was necessary to know how each man stood affected towards the war—whether his feelings were enlisted in his country's behalf, or whether secretly or publicly he was aiding the enemy." If any individual fell under suspicion of *the people*, the committee were immediately notified, and they forthwith repaired to the person and demanded an avowal of his sentiments. If found to be lukewarm or indifferent to the liberal cause, he was closely watched. If a Tory in sentiment, he was remanded to Newgate. The dividing line of principle was positive and distinct. On the royal side, the British officials proclaimed those to be outlaws who favored the cause of the *rebels*, and pronounced free pardon to such as ceased their resistance, or espoused the cause of Royalty. Besides this it is said they gave secret protection papers to those applying for them on the score of friendship. These acts of the British impelled the colonists to take the most rigorous measures in self defense.

boon of being governed by British laws. We can not for a moment doubt the noble intentions of the American patriots in the severity of those measures, for the results are now universally acknowledged, and generally appreciated. If at the commencement of their struggle for liberty, they had permitted those emissaries to raise a question as to the right of independent government, and had suffered them to prowl about unmolested, spreading the fuel of disaffection, a *civil*, instead of a national war must have followed. The proud eagle of Liberty would not so soon have risen over this land of plenty, and the reveille of British soldiery would have told misfortune's tale, of a government of force. Well would it be for us their descendants if like them we could appreciate the blessings of liberty, of our happy form of government, and the value of mutual peace and union of this great confederacy of *Sovereign States!*

At this day, it seems to us hardly possible that any considerable number could have been found, so indifferent to the possession of liberty, as to oppose their countrymen in arms, struggling for freedom, and the inalienable rights of man. We are prone to regard them as inhuman, deluded beings, unworthy to live. But let us pause a moment,



yield a little to our charity, to consider the state of the country at that time, and some of the influences by which they were surrounded. The Tories were aware that in the history of the world, every people who had attempted the experiment of a free representative form of government, although in some cases for a while successful, yet in the end they had positively failed in their hopes and plans, their struggles had only ended in loss of power by the many, and usurpation of it by the few. From the history of the Republics of Greece in early Europe, through the long vista of twenty-four centuries, the plebeian people had striven through toil and blood, only to bend their necks at last to the yoke of some powerful chieftain in war. They and their ancestors had suffered and bled in the Indian wars, afterwards in wars with the French, and with French and Indians combined, and their mother England had been an ally who had assisted them in their defence, and to whom they still looked for aid in emergency. Many also, were bound by the ties of near kindred to friends across the ocean. Those in civil power received their authority direct from England, and many of the clergy were commissioned by the church of England, by which also they received their chief support. All of them,



doubtless, were biassed by early education and prejudice, to prefer a kingly to a free government, and they dreaded the troublesome responsibility of beginning the contest for a change, well knowing that an ignominious death awaited them in case their experiment failed. In the words of our Declaration of Independence, "all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed." On the other hand, they are blameable for opposing independence, because the oppression of British tyranny had planted them or their fathers upon the inhospitable shores of a new world; they had generously expended their blood and treasure for the maintenance of the crown, and had obeyed its mandates by assisting in the war against France, which resulted in the acquisition of a vast territory to the English nation. Their trade had been monopolized by her; then, when prudence would have dictated a relaxation of authority, the mother country rose in her demands, and imposed heavy taxes to pay off a national debt of more than \$750,000,000. The idea should have been discarded, that a small island, more than two thousand miles distant, should hold in

bondage, without representation, a territory on this continent, large as the whole of Europe, and destined to equal it in population. They should have remembered too, that citizens of the early Republics, possessed not our advantage of historical experience of other Republics, to delineate the faults of free government, by which they could avoid their errors, and adopt their benefits; and no well defined system of confederated states, with a constitution limiting the just powers of government, had ever been devised. The masses in early ages were ignorant, superstitious, and heathenish; they were crammed into dense cities and villages, which are the hotbeds of vice and corruption; while on the contrary, the inhabitants of America could glean wisdom from the history of past ages, and commune with the great and mighty dead. They possessed abundance of territory for all; plenty of room in which to develop their free energies, and afford to all uneasy spirits a medium in which to expend their surplus gas, in the moral atmosphere of a continent. They could realize the sentiment:

“No pent up Utica contracts our powers,  
“For the whole boundless Continent is ours.”

They also were the disciples of a divine religion,

which tends to harmonize the heart, and elevate the moral character of man.

The first keeper of Newgate was Capt. *John Viets*, who resided near by, and who supplied them daily with such food and necessaries as were required. His bill, as recorded for one year, in 1774, is as follows :

“Captain *John Viets*, Master, as per his bill for “services, boarding workmen and providing for “prisoners, &c., 29l. 5s. 10d.”

At that time no guard was kept through the day, but two or three sentinels kept watch during the night. There was an anteroom or passage, through which to pass before reaching their cell, and the usual practice of Capt. *Viets*, when he carried their food, was, to look through the grates into this passage, to observe whether they were near the door, and if not, then to enter, lock the door after him, and pass on to the next. The inmates soon learned his custom, and accordingly prepared themselves for an escape. When the Captain came next time, some of them had contrived to unbar their cell door, and huddled themselves in a corner behind the door in the passage, where they could not easily be seen, and upon his opening it, they sprung

upon him, knocked him down, pulled him in, and taking the key from his possession, they locked him up and made good their escape. What were the Captain's reflections on his sudden transition from keeper to that of prisoner is not stated, but he probably thought, with Falstaff, "discretion the "better part of valor," and that he must adopt, in future, more prudent measures. His absence was soon perceived by his family, who came to his relief. The inhabitants around rallied immediately, and gave chase to the absconding heroes, and finally succeeded in capturing nearly the whole of them. Several were taken in attempting to cross the Tunxis, or Farmington river, at Scotland bridge, a few miles south; sentinels having been stationed at that place to intercept them. Some, Santa Ana like, took refuge upon trees, and there met with certain capture. A respected matron, then a child, states, that the news of their escape and capture spread as much dread or terror among the children in the neighborhood as if they had been a band of midnight assassins. Although the prison was considered impregnable, the first convict which had been put there, *John Hinson*, had escaped. He was committed Dec. 2, 1773, and escaped after a confinement of eighteen days, by

being drawn up through the mining shaft, assisted, it is said, by a woman to whom he was paying his addresses.

After the general escape and recapture, the following report was made by the overseers :

*To the Honourable General Assembly now sitting at Hartford :*

We, the subscribers, overseers of Newgate Prison, would inform your Honors, that Newgate Prison is so strong and secure that we believe it is not posable for any person put there to escape, unless by assistance from abroad ; yet it so happens that one *John Hinson*, lately sent there by order of the Honourable the Superior court, has escaped by the help of some evil minded person at present unknown, who, in the night season next after the 9th inst., drew the prisoner out of the shaft ; and we believe no place ever was or can be made so secure, but that if persons abroad can have free access to such Prison, standing at a distance from any dwelling house, the prisoners will escape ; we therefore Recommend it to your Honors, that some further security be added to that prison in order to secure the prisoners : What that security shall be, will be left to your Honors ; yet we would observe to your Honors that the east shaft where the prisoner



escaped, is about 70 feet to the bottom of the prison, the whole of which is through a firm rock except 10 feet at top, which is stoned up like a well; we therefore propoes that the upper part down to the rock be lock'd up, and stones about 15 or 18 inches square and of suitable length, be laid across said shaft about eight inches asunder, &c. And as to the west shaft, which is about 25 feet deep, secured with a strong iron gate, about six feet below the surface, we propoes that a strong log house be built of two or three rooms, one of which, to stand over this shaft to secure it from persons abroad, and the other rooms to be for the Miners, &c. All which is submitted by your Honor's Most obedient Humble Servants.

*Erastus Wolcott,*

*Josiah Bissell,*

*Joh'n Humphrey.*

Hartford Jan'y 17th, 1774.

Connecticut at that period held each year two sessions of her Assembly, and at the next session, four months after, the following report was presented by the overseers:



*To the Hon. the Gen'l Assembly now sitting at Hartford :*

We the subscribers hereto, overseers of Newgate Prison, beg leave to represent to your honors, That sone after the rising of the assembly in Jan'y last, three delinquents were committed from Windham, and two others from New London county, where-upon, notwithstanding the severity of the season, we immediately set about making those further securities that your Honors directed, and have built a strong log house 36 feet in length and 20 feet in width, with timbers 10 inches square, divided into two rooms, one of which includes the west shaft, and in the other, which is designed for the miners to lodge in, &c., we have built a chimney, and compleated the whole except the under floor, the planks for which are not yet sufficiently dried and fit to lay, and some ceiling to secure the miners from the cold winds, which otherwise will pass betwixt the timbers. We have also secured the east shaft where the first prisoner escaped, with iron and stone, and every other place where we thought it possible for any to escape ; and we apprehend that said prison is now well secured and fitted to receive and employ those offenders that may be sent there. An account of our disbursements, &c., we have ready to lay be-

fore your honours or Auditors, to be appointed as your Honors shall direct. Your Honors must have heard that the prisoners have all escaped that prison; it would be long, and perhaps difficult, in writing, to give a particular and distinct account how this was done; your Honours will excuse us if we only say that they effected their escape by the help of evil minded persons abroad, before the necessary and proposed securitys could be compleated. We would further inform your Honours, that we had engaged two miners to assist the prisoners at work, who were to have been there about the time the prisoners escaped, and one of them actually left his business and came there a few days after the escape; him we have retained, and to this time principally employed in compleating the securities to the prison; the other we gave intelligence of the escape before he left his business, and prevented his coming; but have engaged him to attend when wanted. All which is submitted to your Honours, by your Honours' most obedient and humble servants.

Hartford, May 14th, 1774.

In the spring of 1776, the prisoners attempted an escape by burning the block house over the shaft. A level had been opened from the bottom of

the mines through the hill westward, for the purpose of draining off the water, and the mouth of this level was chiefly closed by a heavy wooden door firmly fastened. They had by degrees collected sufficient combustibles, and with a piece of stone and steel they kindled a fire against the door, which burned as fast as damp fuel in a damp dungeon naturally could; but instead of making their escape from the prison, they all nearly made their final escape from the world; for the dense smoke and blue flame soon filled the apartment and almost suffocated them. Search being made, one of them was found dead, and five others were brought forth senseless, but finally recovered. They were afterwards placed in a strong wooden building, erected for the purpose above ground. They set this building on fire the next year, and burned it to the ground. Nearly all escaped, but several of them were afterwards retaken. A few years after, the block house, so called, was rebuilt, but prudence by the officers in the management was disregarded. Had they been more careful in adopting safeguards for themselves and the prisoners, they might have avoided the dreadful scene which was soon to follow—a scene of conflict and blood!

As the war with England now raged with fury, the animosity between the Whigs and Tories had grown in proportion, and the seal of distinct party was in many places stamped with vivid impression, so that at this period the number doomed to the prison had amounted to thirty, and many of them were Tories. They were a desperate set of men, and for their greater security a guard was allotted to each one, the thirty guards being armed with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets. On the night of the 18th of May, 1781, the dreadful tragedy occurred which resulted in the escape of all the prisoners. A prisoner was confined, by the name of *Young*, and his wife wishing to be admitted into the cavern with him, she was searched, and while two officers were in the act of raising the hatch to let her down, the prisoners rushed out, knocked down the two officers, and seizing the muskets of nearly all the rest who were asleep, immediately took possession of the works, and thrust most of the guards into the dungeon after a violent contest. One of them, *Mr. Gad Sheldon*, was mortally wounded, fighting at his post, and six more wounded severely. Said a venerable old lady recently deceased: "It was a dreadful sight "to see the wounded guard, as they were brought

“into our house one after another, and laid upon  
“the floor, weltering in their blood! When I  
“came into the room, the faithful *Sheldon* sat on a  
“bench, his body bent forward, and a bayonet  
“dripping with blood lying before him, which he  
“had just drawn out of his breast—it was a deadly  
“stab!” Many of the prisoners were wounded;  
some of them were assailed and gashed by their  
comrades through mistake, while fighting in the  
darkness of the conflict. Nearly all made their  
escape; some from their wounds were unable to  
flee. One was taken on a tree in Turkey hills,  
east of the mountain; a few others were found in  
swamps and barns in the neighboring towns.

A Committee was appointed by the Assembly,  
then in session, to repair to Newgate and inquire  
into the facts respecting the insurrection. They  
report the evidence in the case, some of which it  
is curious to notice in their own words. “*Jacob*  
“*Southwell* was awakened by the tumult, took a  
“gun and run out of the guard-house, and durst  
“not go back for fear they would hurt him. N. B.  
“A young man *more fit to carry fish to market*, than to  
“keep guard at Newgate. *Nathan Phelps* was also  
“asleep—wak’d but could do nothing, the prison-  
“ers having possession of the guard-house (a small



“lad just fit to drive Plow with a very gentle  
“Team.) He went to Mr. *Viets's* and stayed till  
“morning (poor boy)! *Abigail*, the wife of *Jno.*  
“*Young*, alias *Mattick*, says that the first night she  
“came to the prison, she gave to her husband 52  
“silver dollars—her husband told her after he  
“came out that he had given Sergt. *Lilly* 50 of  
“them in order that he may suffer the prisoners to  
“escape—that he told her the Sergt. purposely left  
“the door of the south jail unlocked—that Sergt.  
“*Lilly* was not hurt—that she borrowed the money  
“of a pedler—that she heard *Lilly* say, it was a  
“great pity such likely men should live and die  
“in that place.”

Nov. 6th, 1782, the wooden buildings of the prison were again destroyed by fire, and doubtless by design, in order to aid the escape of the Tories in confinement. This was the *third* time the prison buildings had been burned in nine years, since its first inauguration, and more than one-half the whole number of convicts had escaped by various means. The authorities probably by this time began to change their opinion that “it would be next to impossible for any person to escape,” and that as a Yankee once said, it was “dangerous being safe.”



The following is too rich in orthography to be omitted. It is recorded as written in 1783:

*To the Hon. General assembly,* The humble petition of *Able Davis*—where as at the honorable supreme court holden in Hartford in December last I was conficted of mis Deminer on the count of newgate being burnt as I had comand of said gard and was orded to bee confind 3 month and pay fourteen pounds for disabaing orders, I cant read riten, but I did all in my power to Distingus the flame, but being very much frited and not the faculty to doe as much in distress as I could another time and that is very smaul, what to do I thot it was best to let out the prisners that was in the botams as I had but just time to get the gates lifted before the hous was in flames, and the gard being frited it twant in my power to scape them. I now pray to be Deflehaned from further in prisment, and the coust of said sute as I hante abel to pay the coust, or give me the liberty of the yard as I am very unwell as your pitishner in Duty bound will for ever pray.

*Abel Daveis.*

Hartford Goal January 14th 1783.

The struggles at this prison to subdue Toryism, were doubtless greater than at any other place in any of the Colonies. Many of those in confinement were men of talents, spirit, and wit; and they occasionally indulged their proclivities by making poetry in derision of the measures which were carried on by the patriots against England. The following are a part of some rhymes (referring to the patriots) composed by them, and sent to their keeper:

“Many of them in halters will swing,  
“Before *John Hancock* will ever be king.”

*John Hancock*, being one of the most ardent friends of the Revolution, was particularly obnoxious to the British, and a price was set on his head; this raised the spirit of the colonists, and they at once elected him President of Congress, which drew upon him the special odium of the Tories.

The following is from the original now in the possession of the author:

“Mr. *Viets*: If you have any *meet* cooked, you  
“will much *oblidge* me by sending me a dinner,  
“for I suffer for want.

“*Peter Sackett.*”

This man was one of the thirty who were engaged in a bloody contest with the guard, and he made his escape at that time. The imprisoned Tories were not without sympathisers, and *spiritual* comforters. The Rev'd *Roger Viets*, an Episcopal clergyman, occasionally expounded the gospel to them, and taught them the gospel precept, *Honor the King*. His reverence was a noted good liver among the people, and besides what was given to him in donations, he received annually 40 pounds from the established Church of England. American liberty becoming at length so popular, and treason so opprobrious, he finally took sudden leave, and emigrated to the British dominions of Nova Scotia, where his descendants now reside in respectable circumstances.

#### A TORY CLERGYMAN IN NEWGATE.

The choicest specimen of black hearted treason under the cloak of priestly sanctity, was exhibited in the person of a Tory by the name of *Simeon Baxter*, who was confined in the caverns. From which of the thirteen colonies he was sent, is not ascertained, but he must have been regarded by the people as a real champion of Toryism. He preached a sermon to his companions in prison in 1781, which was printed in London soon

after. A copy now extant has been furnished for this work by the kindness of *George Brinley, Esq.*, of Hartford, and on account of its novelty of conception, acrimony of spirit, ability and pungency, it is here published entire, with its title in full, according to the print. It will be observed that the text, as he quotes it, varies from the precise phraseology of the scriptures; the words "having descended" being surreptitiously employed, probably because he considered them an improvement on the scriptures as applicable to his situation, he being compelled to *descend* into the caverns. Whatever may be thought of his sentiments, the ability with which the discourse was written proves its author to have been a man of powerful intellect and of considerable research, zealously determined to incite his companions to deeds of blood. It is indeed wonderful that Gen. *Washington* or the Continental Congress escaped assassination, when such vindictive characters boldly advised a resort to the *dagger* in order to exterminate the friends of liberty.

*Tyrannicide proved Lawful, from the Practice and Writings of Jews, Heathens and Christians: A Discourse, delivered in the Mines at Symsbury, in the Colony of Connecticut, to the Loyalists confined there by Order of the Congress, on September 19, 1781, by SIMEON BAXTER, a Licentiate in Divinity, and voluntary Chaplain to those Prisoners in the Apartment called Orcus :*

Having descended, he preached to the Spirits in Prison.—1st Peter, iii, 19. *Regnabit sanguine multo—ad Regnum quisquis venit ab Exilo.* Whoever comes to His kingdom from exile, he will rule with much blood.—*Suetonius's life of Nero.*

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*To General Washington, and the Congress styling themselves Governors and Protectors of Thirteen Colonies belonging to the Crown of England:*

Gentlemen, That you may have the honour of dying for the people, instead of their dying for you and your allies, was the design I had in preaching and publishing this discourse; and should it produce the desired effect, I shall think myself paid for all my trouble and expence. If you can bestow one generous deed on your ruined country, adopt the act of *Suicide* to balance the evils of your lives, and save the virtuous citizens



of America the glorious trouble of doing justice on you.

Remember Judas was not a patriot till he hanged himself for betraying his Saviour and his God. *Go and do thou likewise* and you will prove yourselves real Saviours of America, and like him, hold a place in the temple of everlasting Fame. Should your courage or your virtue fail in so meritorious a deed, sacred Religion stands on tiptoe to inspire all her children by some hidden thunder or some burnished weapon, to do it for you, and to save themselves from Nimrod's paradise. When you are dead, your grateful countrymen will not let your Honours lie in dust, but will raise you to some airy tomb between the drooping clouds and parching sands: then your exaltation will make islands glad; Peace with new-fledged wings shall fly through every state, and echo happiness to weeping willows; nay, the mourning doves shall forsake the wilderness to chant your praises; and the mope-eyed owls, in open day, shall view with wonder your patriotic virtues.

*The Author.*



*To the Protestant Rebel Ministers of the Gospel in the  
Thirteen Confederated Colonies in America :*

Gentlemen—The bloody part you have acted in obedience to your creditors, the merchant smugglers, both in the pulpit and the field, with your spiritual and temporal swords, entitles you to the second class of patriots, who disgrace religion with hypocrisy, and humanity with barbarity. Spectators with great justice have decided, that you are the successors of him who went to and fro seeking whom he might devour, and not of him who went about doing good. Inasmuch as you began rebellion because your King would not persecute, but tolerate his faithful catholic subjects in Canada, and to support your rebellion, you have since joined yourselves unto idols, and made alliance with the Papists of France to root up the protestant religion, for which our fathers bled and died, inasmuch as you have out-acted the Pope, discarded and abjured your rightful king, neglected to visit those in prison, and forbid the exercise of that charity to the miserable, which hide a multitude of sins, I must take leave of you in the words spoken to your predecessors by the Savior of all penitent sinners, “Go your way for I know you not.”

*The Author.*

*Sermon.*

Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? and what is this that thou hast done unto us? and he said unto them. As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.—*Judges*, xv, 11.

In the beginning of this chapter we are told that the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, for which they were delivered into the hands of the Philistines forty years; a heavy judgment to fall under the power of any people without law, justice, or mercy! yet God has considered such calamity as due to idolaters, and the enemies of common sense. Whatever nation is governed by a set of men like the Philistines, without any fixed rules of right, is controlled by a set of beasts, with sharp horns, arrogance, and pride. Israel being thus in bondage, God raised up Samson to deliver them, who went down to Timnath, and took a wife of the Philistines, of whom he was unjustly robbed, without hopes of any legal redress. After this outrage, Samson had a just opportunity to make war upon them, which he did, though unassisted and opposed by his servile countrymen. The men of Judah, like modern politicians, were alarmed at the war which threatend them, and sought peace with Philistines by joining against

their deliverer, and accosted him in the words of the text. "What is this that thou hast done unto us?" Samson answered, and justified his conduct upon the law of nature: "As they have done unto me so have I done unto them,"—a good defence against the Philistines, who acted upon private principles, and trampled under foot the laws of God and civil society. Had the case been otherwise, Samson, who judged Israel twenty years, and whom the Lord blessed, would have sought justice from the decision of an impartial judge, instead of redressing himself by the natural law of retaliation. There are but two ways of deciding differences; the one is by law, the other by force. The first is the rule of men formed into civil societies; the second of men and beasts in the state of nature.

Kings of civil societies, in a just war, have recourse to the state of nature, and use their last arguments, when justice cannot be had for injuries received. Cicero, one of the luminaries of the heathen world, asserts that "war is supported by "us against those of whom we can obtain no law." Grotius, the great oracle of Christians, saith, that "the law forbids me to pursue my right but by a "course of law." This is a good rule in civil society, where justice is administered according to

the laws of right, where the innocent are protected against oppressors; but in a state of nature, where no law but that of power doth exist, the maxim of Grotius is not applicable, unless the nature of law is to support the tyrants, and oppress the afflicted.

Moses, the legislator of the Jews, knowing that men were partial to themselves, unjust to others, and unfit to be their own judges, ordered controversies to be decided according to the law: but whilst Israel was in Egypt, law and justice had no place; whereupon Moses, to point out the law of nature, set an example to be followed by all men on proper occasions; he saw his brethren oppressed, an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, and knowing he could obtain no legal satisfaction, erected an high court of justice, and smote the Egyptian, which proves we may revert to the law of nature, and repel force by force, and do justice for ourselves when no legal justice can be had. If this be not the case, law is a scourge to the oppressed, and a protection to tyrants, which is contrary to the spirit of all laws, which always provide remedies for slaves against their cruel masters. Since the law of God and man takes care for slaves, and protects them from the injuries of their masters, how unreasonable is it, that the free people of

America, who have only God for their master, should find no redress against the oppressions of a barbarous set of usurpers and tyrants, who have laid waste our once happy country, and murdered our friends and relations before our eyes ; who, to calm our complaints of misery, either hang us upon trees, or cast us into some darksome prison, where their midnight assassins launch us out of time. Merciful God ! if our wives and children have the privilege of starving in the streets, we are taught to reverence the favour as an act of lenity in Congress and its associates !

Since we live in an evil time, when all laws of civil society are repealed, “the whole head sick “and the heart faint,” the people crouching beneath their burdens and crying “let us alone that “we may serve the Egyptians,” while the Levites from their pulpits, like the men of Judah from the top of Etam, are proclaiming “know you not that “the congress are rulers over us ? and is it not “better to serve them than to die by the hand of “Saul or the bitter waters of Marah ?” Since this is not the voice of wisdom, but of Athalia, of Mattan and his priests who were slain at the horse gate and the altar, according to the law of retaliation, let us return to our natural right, and act



the magistrate upon those usurpers who have shut up the course of justice. For our encouragement we have for our example the prophet Samuel, who performed justice upon Agag with his own hand, saying "as thy sword has made women childless, "so shall thy mother be childless among women," a very proper punishment for tyrants, who advance themselves above the reach of all justice, except the prayers of the people, and the dagger of an Ehud. Providence and Nature have ever united devotion and a javelin in the hands of a Judith, and a Jael, to bring down an Holofernes, and a Sisera; because tyrants are such devils as cannot be cast out by prayer and fastings, unless aided by the workman's hammer. Those weapons unite Heaven and Earth to govern such men as will not be governed by civil laws, that every man might, agreeable to the Gospel, reap what he sows, and receive the same measure which he has meted out to others. We may complain with Jeremiah and say, "Why do the wicked prosper and the treacherous wax fat? How long shall the land mourn, and "the herbs of the field wither?" We may add, that America resembles the state of the Jews upon the rivers of Babylon; for she has long hung her harps upon the willows, and forgot the mirth of

Zion: "her children are gone forth, and are not; "each one is crying, Woe is me, for I am hurt; "my wound is grievous, and I must bear it; her "pastors are brutish, their work is the work of "errors, the land is in mourning; her spoilers are "seated upon high places to keep peace from all "flesh;" and no Moses, no Ehud, no Samuel, no Samson, no Jehoida, no Jael, nor Judith, hath appeared with a patriotic dagger, to do justice upon our tyrants, and save a sinking country! Surely this is not for want of Patriots, but for the want of truly understanding the laws of God, nature, and civil society, which permit all men to kill thieves, breaking up houses in the night, lest they should escape justice by the help of darkness. Tyrants are worse robbers than the midnight thieves, for they hold themselves above justice, and the laws of civil society, which renders it necessary to repel force by force, and restore perfect liberty, the genuine fruit of law. If this is not the case, if laws of society bind us to submit to usurpers acting opposite to law, a solitary life in the state of nature is preferable to civil society; but experience has taught the world, that there is no protection out of civil society, and in a state of nature we are all Ishmaels, whose hands are against one another.

Men enter into civil societies, but not barely to exist, which they might do dispersed as other animals, but to live happy, and agreeable to the dignity of human nature. To effect this noble view, men agree to submit their passions and appetites to the laws of reason and justice; and whenever lust, avarice, and ambition, are not, and can not be regulated by the laws of the state, social liberty ceases, and natural liberty revives, wherein every man is a soldier, a Moses, a Samson, and may without incurring the guilt of murder, kill those uncircumcised Philistines with a javelin or any other weapon. By thus doing, men act upon the first law which is self-preservation, against thieves, tygers and beasts of prey, a law which is above all political precepts and rules, and superior to every opinion of the mind. Since it is lawful to use any means in destroying tyrants, let us act gloriously in so doing, and free our country of the noxious Congress, under whose usurpations thousands have been murdered, and tens of thousands have been plundered. Having thus briefly touched upon the laws of God, of nature, and of nations, respecting the freedom and the rights of men, I shall,

1st. Enquire whether Congress are usurpers and tyrants, or a legal body of men.

2nd. Prove it the duty of all Protestants to do justice on them as Samson did on the Philistines.

3d. Point out the benefit and necessity of so doing. As to the first head, we shall find congress may claim with great justice and little honour, the dignity of being both usurpers and tyrants. The civil law describes him to be an usurper who governs without any right; and the tyrant is he who governs contrary to the laws. My business is to show who have a right to govern, and what makes the power just. Fathers have a natural right to govern their wives and children, because they defend and support them; and in return the wives and children owe and pay subjection and obedience. Civil society is made up of several independent families by general consent, or by the command of God. Nature and revelation point out the necessity of having some to rule, and others to obey the rules and laws appointed by God, or the people, who alone have the power to alter natural liberty, and establish civil societies. The rulers are to be obeyed so far as they command according to the laws, and no farther; and the great body of the people are the judges to determine when the rulers govern by the laws, and when they do not; for the people are the legislators, and subjects

of their laws, and not subjects of their magistrates. Notwithstanding this, a servant by the laws of God may say, I will not be free, and can bind myself to serve forever. Ex. xxi, 5. And the same power is vested in every society, as appears from the history of Saul and David.

It is very true, that God appointed Saul to be king over the people, to punish them for their ingratitude, which rendered Saul's power absolute, and passive obedience and non-resistance of divine authority; but Samuel anointed David king, who, after Saul's death was confirmed by the elders of Israel at Hebron. 2 Sam. xi, 3. Those elders were the deputies of the people, authorised to limit David's kingly power; for before his inauguration, they obliged him by compact to govern justly, i. e. to protect the good, and to execute wrath upon the evil. Thus David became a minister of God to rule for the good of his people. Hence it is plain that all just power of government originates from God or the people; therefore, all who arrogate to themselves the power of governing, and can not produce a commission from God or the people, are usurpers and tyrants, who may oppress but can not govern. To such a power, people may be subject for wrath, but not for conscience sake.



After what has been suggested, have we not reason and a natural right to ask Congress, "who made you rulers over us? If God, why have not you published your commission? If the people, where was the place that we assembled? when did we give our consent? who were our elders to confirm your mighty power?"\*

Whenever Congress shall answer these important and natural questions, and prove their authority to be from heaven or of men, I will gladly quit my

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\* True it is that near one hundred persons convened at Wethersfield, according to an advertisement signed by one *Thomas Seymour*, a lawyer, and chose a member to represent in Congress the County of Hartford, containing above sixty thousand souls. But it is presumed that previous to the choice of members of Congress, the question *whether there should be a Congress*, ought to have been put to the vote. That however, was artfully evaded; a vast majority of the people were thereby divested of their weight in the Colony, as it would have been in the highest degree absurd and nugatory to have voted for members of a Congress *which did not exist*, and which they would not have suffered to exist, had a fair opportunity been given for their votes on that point. This was the case throughout most of the Colonies. The Congress once formed in that unfair manner, decreed that members in future should be elected only by the true friends of America; that is, such as should abjure their king and sign the league and covenant; so that three fourths of the Colony of Connecticut have never given a vote even for a *Member*.

chains, and submit to their dominion. Until these questions are duly answered, I will view my dungeon as my palace, and continued to say, If changing the government established by our ancestors, without our consent, or that of the king, or the nation of which we are a part ; if dissolving charters, oaths, laws, and establishing iniquity by the bayonet ; if taking away men's lives, liberty and property, by Committees of Safety, the Inquisition, and Star Chamber court in America ; if maintaining rebellion by force and fraud to the benefit of a junto, and to the destruction of the people of property ; if these things denote what is tyranny, Congress can not, with all its impudence, but own itself composed of the greatest tyrants that ever disgraced human nature. Congress having done all this, and commanded themselves to be prayed for as the supreme authority of America ; they have left us in the state either of David to pray for deliverance from cruel and unreasonable men, or to pray like the woman of Syracuse for Dionysius.

I shall now add some outward marks given of Ancient tyrants, to show the violence and deceit of Congress. "Tyrants" says Tacitus, "subvert laws  
"and government under colour of defending the  
"rights and liberties of the people ; and when they have got sufficient power, they rob the people of

“all their rights.” Plato says, “Tyrants practise  
“contrary to physicians, who purge us of our evil  
“humors, but they, of our purest blood.” Ma-  
“chiavel says “Tyrants provide for ministers, when  
“they flatter and torture Scripture, to prove  
“usurpers lawful governors.” Aristotle says, “The  
“most successful art of tyrants, is to pretend great  
“love for God and Religion.” In these things we  
know Congress have excelled St. Oliver, and taught  
us that in godliness is great gain ; and that preach-  
ing and praying lead to other kingdoms besides  
that of heaven ; we are also taught that its arms  
are not carnal, but protestant ; for they have  
overcome the church in defiance of all her prayers  
and tears. Had not modern Christians preferred  
the honour of being governed by a Protestant  
Congress, they might have had preaching for their  
tenths, instead of paying life, liberty, and property.  
To their comfort be it spoken, Congress manages  
the spiritual and temporal sword with as much  
dexterity as the Pope of Rome. Further evidence  
need not be produced of the tyranny of Congress,  
unless to such men as have great faith and little  
understanding ; therefore since we both see and feel  
the merciless power of those beasts of prey, I shall  
proceed, secondly, to prove it the duty of all

Protestants to do justice on Congress, as Samson did on the Philistines. Among us are two sects of Christians who daily pray to be delivered from the tyranny of those uncircumcised Philistines, but conscientiously differ about the mode; the one expects the Lord to remove them; the other expects that deliverance will be given by a Samson, armed with the jawbone of an ass. The Tories believe patience to be the only lawful cure, when under the power of usurpers and tyrants; the Whigs believe the safety of the people to be the first law, and laws to be above all rulers; and that kings and governors are accountable for their conduct at the bar of the community.

Here is the creed of those two sects touching lawful rulers; but I must remind them, without condemning either, that no people of sober sense ever gave up justice and liberty in duty and conscience, to usurpers and tyrants, who are Ishmaels, and wholly excluded all human protection, because they are enemies to societies, subverters of laws, and murderers of individuals; it is for this reason justice dispenses with her forms, and leaves tyrants and usurpers in the number of those savage beasts who herd not together, but defend themselves by their own strength, and prey upon all weaker

animals. Would our Whigs and Tories reflect a few moments upon the nature of civil society, and upon what Tully says of laws, magistrates and people, they would discover laws to be above magistrates, as they are above individuals. It follows, that, when the depravity of men's wills renders them unfit to live in human society, it is murder in the community to let them live. If, then, in the land of peace, legal rulers degenerate into tyrants, weary people, and merit death, what deserve usurpers and tyrants, who, like the swellings of Jordan, sweep the world of safety by their iron rods?

Since we know that usurpers hold themselves above all justice but the stroke of some generous hand, we are to consider laws of civil society in regard to them as cobwebs, and no longer act like the Athenians, who punished only little thieves. If we were beasts, we should have a right to protect ourselves against our enemies; and as men and Christians, we can not have less by entering into civil society. Let us, then, awake from slumber, and convince those men who shun justice in the court, that *they shall meet it in their beds*; for they are armed against all, and all may lawfully arm against them. Nothing is more absurd than



to kill thieves, vipers and bears, to prevent their cruel designs, and at the same time preserve Congress from acting much worse than the others intended. No one can any longer doubt of the lawfulness of destroying public robbers, whenever prudence points out the way, since the laws of God and men make it lawful to extirpate private robbers. Let us live in constant faith that Heaven will soon sanctify some patriotic hand, armed with *some sacred weapon*, to bring down that bloody and deceitful house, which holds its existence not only to the misery, but to the everlasting infamy of Protestant America. The action is not only *lawful*, but *glorious* in idea, and *immortal* in its reward! Were not these sentiments supported by the wise and grave among the ancients, and the Jesuits and Protestants of the last century, I should not have preached them in this dreary abode. But to wipe all doubts from your minds, I will produce some authorities to support what has been said.

Tertullian says: "Against common enemies and traitors to the rights and majesty of the people everything is lawful."

Xenophon says: "The Grecians erected in their temples among their gods, statues for those that killed tyrants."

It was enacted by the Valerian law, that “whoever made themselves rulers without command from the people, were tyrants, and might be killed.”

Plutarch says: “It is lawful to kill usurpers without trial.”

Polybius says: “Men of the greatest virtues conspired against and killed tyrants.”

Cicero applauds Brutus for conspiring against Julius Cæsar: “What action, O! Jubiter, more glorious, more worthy of eternal memory?”

At Athens, according to Solon’s law, “death was decreed for tyrants and their abettors.”

Plato says: “When tyrants can not be expelled by law, the citizens may use secret practices.” The reason is, community must be preserved from the rage of tyrants, who can receive no injustice, either by force or fraud. Thus you have the opinions of the ancients; while the history of Rome, Christian and Germanic states and England teaches us the same doctrines and practices.

The Jesuits, in Spain and France, have ever held the knife of justice as a law for tyrants. Our fathers in the last century erected a high court of justice for a tyrant, his reverend and right reverend abettors. Congress and the governors of our respective states, have sufficiently proved by their

practices, that the killing of tyrants and their adherents is not murderous, but truly Christian, upon which principle, America armed against her rightful king; and, for the same reason, we that love our country *may destroy the self-created Congress*, which sits in Cæsar's chair, above citation, or a court of justice. What Whig or Tory will be content with formal remedies which are far off?—what justice can we expect from malefactors who have the power to hang and assassinate their rightful judges? Consonant to what has been said about tyrants and usurpers, stands the law of God, viz: "*He that acts presumptuously shall surely die.*" In such a case, every man is judge and executioner. By this law, Moses slew the Egyptians; Ehud slew Eglon; Samson, the Philistines; Samuel, Agag; and Jehoida, Athaliah. By parity of reason, every Cicero and Brutus may smite hip and thigh, the Congress, its Mattans and Janizaries, for they have presumptuously smote our children and countrymen with whips of brass, fed them with passive obedience, and cloathed them in prisons with famine, nakedness and death. It can not be infamous to destroy them by whom all America is oppressed; because Moses is immortalized in the records of God, for killing an individual who

oppressed another. This we may depend on, that whatever was lawful and right in Moses, Ehud and Samson, is lawful and right for Whigs and Tories in America; for the laws of nature, retaliation and justice, are the same here as they were in Jewry.

Some people object, and say that these examples taken from Holy Scripture, were of men sent by God to kill those several tyrants, and we have not the like commission. Milton, of immortal fame, has answered this objection. Says he: "If God commanded tyrants to be killed, it is a sign that tyrants ought to die." Besides, we read that all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city had rest after Athaliah was slain with the sword; that the people obeyed Jehoiada as king for the good he had done, and buried him among their princes; which was but half the reward given to this patriot, for the divine historian has recorded his generous deed in the book of God, where the last man that lives shall read his eulogies, and the just command which he gave, to kill the followers of Athaliah; a proper warning to our Protestant Levites, our generals and committees of safety, to repent, lest they likewise perish with their masters, by the workman's hammer. But the objection supposes what in fact is not true; for Samson and those

other worthies who killed tyrants, never alledged the command of God for what they did, but defended themselves upon the plea of retaliation—"As they did unto me, so have I done unto them." God had not appeared to Moses in the bush prior to his smiting the Egyptian; and Jehoiada had only the call which is common to all men—to do natural justice when legal can not be had. Some people pretend to believe Congress are not usurpers and tyrants, because traffic and appeals are carried on under their dominion, which argues a tacit consent of the public.

To prove these men mistaken, I need only say, that commerce and pleading were carried on in Rome under Caligula and Nero, yet those who conspired against them were not deemed rebels, but were eternized for their virtue.

Having pointed out the marks and practices of tyrants and usurpers, and shown the lawfulness and glory of killing them, I shall now, in the third and last place, hint the benefits and necessity of doing it.

What is our present condition? Are we not slaves and living instruments of Congress, Washington and the Protestant Ministers, and their Romish allies? Poor wretches, indeed, are we!



Cozened out of peace, religion, liberty and property ; robbed of the blessings of Judah ; and cursed with the spirit and burden of Issachar, by a set of men without virtue, or the generous vices attending greatness ! Is it no wonder that slaves should lose their courage with their virtue, for who can fight for Cæsar\* that despises them, or for Nero, when every victory gained for him confirms their bondage, and adds a new rivet to their chains. Thus are we compelled to live, or not to live at all ; deliverance is not to be hoped for from our patience, because usurpers are never modest but in the hour of weakness ; nor was any government ever managed with justice, that was gained by villainy. Liberty and bondage are now before us ; those who choose bondage are to murder Brutus ; and those who choose liberty, are to kill the uncircumcised Congress. Yet I find some men scruple to kill their oppressors with a dagger in the dark,

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\* The American Loyalists have little reason to confide in the mercy of the British army and navy, who have uniformly for seven years treated them much worse than they have the Rebels ; and should they judge the English nation by the severity of its military forces, which have killed and plundered more Loyalists than Rebels, no nation could censure them if they, like Congress, should buy their good will, at the expense of their allegiance.

although they allow it lawful to destroy a thief that comes unarmed to rob; those men seem to forget the law of self-preservation, the danger of open force, and that tyrants are such devils as rend the body in the act of exorcism.

How can it be lawful to kill oppressors in an open field, prepared to rob the men they mean to murder, and unlawful to kill such villains in the dark, without hazard to the patriot or to the commonwealth? If it is expedient to lance an imposthume to save a life, it is lawful to lance the Congress to save the liberties of our country; for those boards of the wilderness have broken down the walls of the vineyard, and destroyed the vintage with unlimited power, which always subverts civil society, and turns a Cicero into a Caligula. Our religion, and all we call valuable, are in danger. Despotism is now predominant; and America, once the asylum of Protestants, persecuted beyond the seas, is sold to the mother of harlots, and will soon be cursed with the Inquisition to establish Congress and its generals, as the hereditary lords of the land. Tyranny and oppressions have increased with the age of Congress, and our deliverance depends upon the virtuous spears of an injured people, or upon the generosity of our tyrants

by hanging themselves. But since we know they lack this virtue, nothing remains for the patriots but to do justice upon them, and to immortalize their heads upon well erected gibbets. Whatever Congress may think of this proposed exaltation, they may depend upon it, that eight-tenths of the people would rejoice at the sight, and the children yet unborn would be happy under their rightful king.

Some serious Whigs who have lost their courage with their fortunes, groan under their present burdens and say, "we fear the consequence of destroying "Congress." I answer, could we be in a worse condition by a change, the bare desire of a change would be a sign of madness. Common sense forbids me to undergo certain misery, for fear of contingent evils; or to let a fever rage because there is danger of taking physic. I am now in prison, where I must infallibly perish if I am not relieved; and shall I refuse deliverance from this darksome dungeon for fear of being confined in some other place? Heaven forbid such madness! Let us remember the rock from whence we were hewn. Had we not ancestors in the last century who preferred liberty and religion in this howling wilderness, to despotism and persecution in Brittannia's

fertile fields? Are we so far degenerated as to bow down to tyrants and usurpers? Our fathers resisted lions, and killed tyrants without committing murder and shall we submit to wolves and beasts of prey to let usurpers live? No! let the examples of Ehud, Samson, Moses, and Cromwell, lead us back to glory, virtue, and religion. If America can produce no such heroes, we must exclaim with the children of Israel, "Would to God we had died in the land of Egypt, where we sat by the flesh pots, and eat bread to the full;" for then, as Cicero says, "the quality of our master would have graced our condition as slaves." We have rights of civil society to restore; we have honour, virtue, and religion to maintain; let us therefore take the first prudent opportunity to revenge our wrongs, and kill those tyrants who are lurking in every corner to spy out our motions, and murder the innocent. Their motto is to destroy or be destroyed. Therefore, let safety rouse us into action, let Fame reward the sacred hand of him that gives the fatal blow; let his name live forever with Cato, and with Brutus. O how I long to save my country by one heroic immortal action! but alas! my chains and dreary mansion, where the light of conscience reigns without the light of the sun, of the moon,

or the stars ! \* To you, my virtuous countrymen, who are free of the chains with which I am loaded, I conclude my address. It is now in your power to circumcise, to put down those uncircumcised tyrants, and to restore yourselves to your social rights. You know the action that will do the business, and which shall register your names among the Gods and bravest men. Patriotism warms your souls, and thousands are burning with ambition to join and save your country from Romish bondage. Make haste ! for the spirit of understanding causeth me to speak in the language of Zophar, "Let death and destruction fall upon" Congress "because they have oppressed and forgotten the poor ; let a fire not blown, consume them ; if they escape the iron weapons, strike them through with a bow of steel, for knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment."

And although the devils are come down in great wrath, with power in their mouths, and in their

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\* Vide the History of Con- the infernal prison at Syms-  
necticut, page 175, published bury, 40 yards below the sur-  
by J. Bew, Pater Noster Row ; face of the earth.  
where is a just description of



tails; although their heads reach the clouds, and though they do hurt with their tails; yet their murders, their fornication, and their thefts shall be revealed, and the earth shall rise against them, "to feed them with the poison of asps. The viper's tongue shall pierce them through, and their greatness shall be chased away as a vision of the night. "This is the portion of the wicked."

Finis.

N. B. The notes on pp. 61, 71 and 75, are by the author of the sermon.

In 1781 Congress applied to Gov. *Trumbull* of Connecticut (known by the appellation of *Brother Jonathan*), for the use of the mines as a prison "for the reception of British prisoners of war, and for the purpose of retaliation." The Governor laid the matter before the Assembly, who agreed to the proposition, and requested him to furnish Congress with the estimates, but as a termination of the war was anticipated soon, the negotiation ended.

This place won a reputation for strength and security throughout the country, though there was more strength in its *name* than in reality. Six years previously, Genl. *Washington* sent several prisoners to be confined in the dungeon, whom he

regarded as "atrocious villains." The following letter from him will be read with interest. It is directed to the Committee of Safety at Simsbury :

*Cambridge, Dec. 7th, 1775.*

Gentlemen: The prisoners which will be delivered you with this, having been tried by a Court martial and deemed to be such flagrant and atrocious villains, that they can not by any means be set at large, or confined in any place near this camp, were sentenced to Simsbury, in Connecticut. You will therefore be pleased to have them secured in your jail, or in such other manner as to you shall seem necessary, so that they can not possibly make their escape. The charges of their imprisonment will be at the Continental expense.

I am, &c.,

*George Washington.*

The vindictive cruelty of the Tories is shown by the following extract from *Barber's Historical Collections of Connecticut* :

On the night following the 14th of March, 1780, the house of Capt. *Ebenezer Dayton*, then residing in the town of Bethany, was broken into and robbed by seven men, who were Tories, and headed by a British officer, from Long Island. Mr.

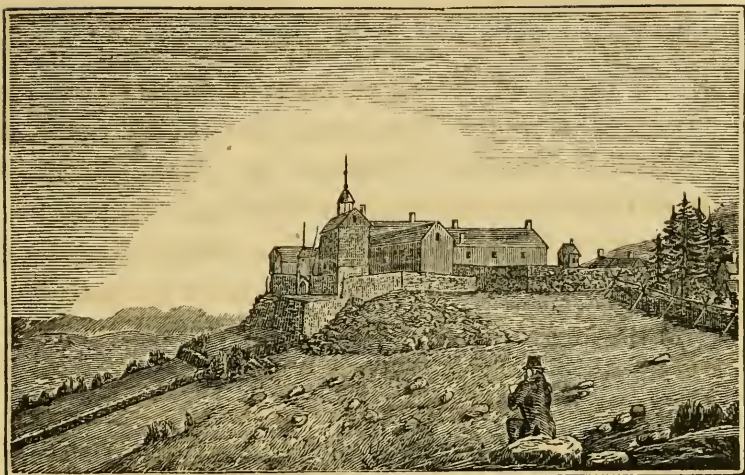
*Dayton's* house was situated nearly opposite where the first meeting house in Bethany was erected, about half a mile south of the present Congregational church, and about ten miles northwest of New Haven. The particulars of this robbery were obtained from the Rev. Mr. *Dayton*, son of Capt. *Dayton* mentioned above. Mr. *Dayton*, who belonged to Long Island, was, on account of his attachment to the American cause, obliged to leave that island, and bring his effects with him to Bethany. A number of men, some of his neighbors, were obliged to leave the island for the same cause, and brought a considerable quantity of money with them, and for a while resided in Mr. *Dayton's* house. With these facts the robbers appear to have become acquainted. At the time of the robbery, Mr. *Dayton* was absent on business at Boston, and the men who had been staying in the house, had left the day before, so that there was no one in the house but his wife, Mrs. *Phebe Dayton*, three small children and two servant colored children. About midnight, while they were all asleep, the window in the bedroom where Mrs. *Dayton* was sleeping, was burst in at once; seven armed men rushed in, passed through the room, and immediately rushed into the chambers, expecting (it is supposed) to

find the men who had left the day before. While they were up stairs, Mrs. *Dayton* went to the front part of the house, raised the window, and endeavored to alarm the neighbors. Mr. *Hawley*, the minister of the parish, and Dr. *Hooker*, the physician of the place, both lived within twenty rods distance, both had lights in their houses at the time, and both heard the alarm, but did not know from whence it proceeded. The robbers, hearing Mrs. *Dayton*, came down, and tearing a sheet into strips, tied her hands behind her, made her sit in a chair, and placed her infant (about six months old) in her lap, while one of the robbers, placing the muzzle of his gun near her head, kept her in this position for about two hours, while the house was thoroughly ransacked from top to bottom. They found about 450 pounds in gold and silver, which belonged to Mr. *Dayton*, besides other valuable articles; what they could not conveniently carry off they wantonly destroyed, breaking in pieces all the crockery, furniture, &c. The whole amount of property carried off and destroyed, including bonds, notes, &c., amounted to £5000. The robbers left the house about 2 o'clock, and went to a place in Middlebury, called *Gunn-Town*, where they were secreted in a cellar by a family who were

friendly to the British cause. While they were on their way to Gunn-Town, they met a young man by the name of *Chauncey Judd*, of Waterbury, on a bridge, who had been to see the young lady he afterwards married. Fearing he might discover them they took him along with them. In the cellar kitchen where they were all secreted, there was a well. Into this well they talked of putting Mr. *Judd*; but the old lady of the house begged they would not think of it, as it would *spoil the water*! They stayed in this house a number of days: afterwards they went to Oxford, where they were secreted for several days longer in a barn; from thence they went to Stratford, took a whale boat, and crossed over to Long Island. The people at Derby, having received information of their passing through that place, two whale boats and crews, commanded by Capt. *William Clarke* and Capt. *James Harvey*, pursued them to the Island, and were fortunate enough to catch them all but one, just within the British lines. They were brought back, tried, condemned, and sent to Newgate; they however broke prison, and fled to Nova Scotia.

Newgate was at this time used by the state for the confinement of criminals, and they were kept chiefly at work in making wrought nails. It was





Newgate Prison.

not until 1790, that it was established permanently as a state prison. It is said to have been the design to employ the convicts in working the mines, which for a while was practiced, but it was soon found that they must necessarily have for that work, precisely the right kind of tools for digging out, and they several times used them for that purpose; this reason, with the consequent necessity of keeping so strong a guard, both day and night, finally induced them to abandon the employment. In 1790 an act was passed constituting Newgate a permanent prison, and providing for the erection of the necessary buildings.

A wooden palisade, mounted with iron spikes, was constructed, inclosing half an acre of ground, within which, workshops and other buildings were placed, and a deep trench was opened on the western side. The wooden enclosure remained until 1802, when a strong wall was laid in its place, which is now standing. A brick building was erected in the centre of the yard for the officers and privates, in the rear and lower part of which a stone apartment was afterwards constructed directly over the mouth of the cavern, and in this room the most quiet prisoners were occasionally kept.

The passage down the shaft into the caverns, is upon a ladder fastened upon one side, and resting on the bottom. At the foot of this passage commences a gradual descent for a considerable distance, all around being solid massive rock or ore. The passages extend many rods in different directions, some of them even leading under the cellars of the dwellings in the neighborhood. In two of the passages are wells of deep water, one of which measures eighty feet—they serve for a free circulation of air to the inmates of this gloomy place, and were sometimes used for shafts through which to lift the ore, when the business was carried on.

On the sides and in the niches of the cavern, platforms were built of boards for the prisoners on which straw was placed for their beds. The horrid gloom of this dungeon can be realized only by those who pass among its solitary windings. The impenetrable vastness supporting the awful mass above, impending as if ready to crush one to atoms; the dripping water trickling like tears from its sides; the unearthly echoes responding to the voice, all conspire to strike the beholder aghast with amazement and horror. These caverns and their precincts, from their antiquity, and the dramas which have been performed within and around, will long be considered as a classic place. The caverns have generally been extremely favorable to the health and longevity of the occupants, which is supposed to arise from some medical quality in the mineral rock.

It is a curious fact, that many of the convicts having previously taken the itch, or other loathsome diseases, while confined in the county jails, which were very filthy, on being for a few weeks kept in the caverns at night, *entirely recovered*; and it is perhaps still more strange, that those who came apparently in health, generally had for a

short time cutaneous eruptions, which appeared to work out of their blood.

A writer upon the subject observes: "From the  
"various windings and other causes, it is not cold  
"there, even in the severest weather; and strange  
"as it may seem, it has been satisfactorily ascer-  
"tained, that the mercury ranged 8 degrees lower  
"in the lodging apartments of the prisoners in the  
"warmest days of summer, than it does in the  
"coldest in the winter. This phenomenon is  
"attributed to the circumstance of the cavities in  
"the rocks being stopped with snow, ice and frost  
"in the winter, which prevents so free a circula-  
"tion of air as is enjoyed in the summer. On the  
"18th of January, 1811, at eight o'clock A. M.,  
"the mercury stood in the cavern at 52 degrees;  
"and in open air, as soon after as it was practica-  
"ble for a person to get up from the cavern (which  
"could not have exceeded five minutes), it fell to  
"one degree below 0."

Among the accidents which have occurred to visitors, was that of Mrs. *Christia Griswold* of Poquonock, while standing at the mouth of the shaft leading down into the cavern, accidentally stepped off, and fell the whole depth, striking on



the rocky bottom. The buoyancy of her clothes, or some other cause, saved her life, though she received injuries from which she never entirely recovered. A prisoner afterwards fell at the same place, fetters and all, without appearing to injure him, it is said, in the least.

Two years since a party of students were on a visit to the mines, when one of their number stepped into the shaft, and fell to the bottom, receiving injuries which caused his death in a few months. The descent upon the ladder is now easily accomplished by any one, and the trouble is well repaid by the interesting relics below. When Newgate was in full blast, it was a very popular place of resort for travelers and pleasure parties, as from a report of the overseers in 1810, it appears that 5,000 persons visited the place annually.

By some, this place has been compared to the ancient Bastile of France, but the comparison is far from being correct, except in the frightful emotions which this dungeon is calculated to inspire. The floors and the roof of the Bastile were made of iron plates riveted upon iron bars. The walls were of stone and iron several feet in thickness ; the whole being surrounded by walls, and a ditch



25 feet deep. The entrance to each cell was through three consecutive doors, secured by double locks. The scanty food, and the silent, unavailing grief, endured by the wretched victims of that dreadful abode, often reduced them to entire idiocy; besides, they were taken from those death-like cells each year, and subjected to the horrible torture of the rack, which often dislocated their joints or crushed their bones, and all this perhaps for merely uttering a sentiment averse to some political party in power! The soldiers and officers also of the Bastile, except the governor, were prisoners in everything but in name. When they entered the walls of that prison, it was for the term of their lives, and a wish expressed even to go out, was instant death. Newgate, in every respect, would bear no similitude to the Bastile. Indeed, the treatment of the prisoners and of the guard was often too lenient, although for disobedience, punishment was sometimes inflicted in the severest manner.

A description of the daily management at Newgate will, at this day, be found both interesting and amusing. The hatches were opened and the prisoners called out of their dungeon each morning at daylight, and three were ordered to *heave up* at

a time ; a guard followed the three to their shops, placing them at their work, and chaining those to the block whose tempers were thought to require it. All were brought out likewise in squads of three, and each followed by a guard. To those who never saw the operation, their appearance can not be truly conceived, as they vaulted forth from the dungeon in their blackness, their chains clanking at every step, and their eyes flashing fire upon the bystanders. It resembled, perhaps more than anything, the belching from the bottomless pit. After a while their rations for the day were carried to them in their several shops. They consisted for one day of one pound of beef or three-fourths of a pound of pork, one pound of bread, one bushel of potatoes for each fifty rations, and one pint of *cider* to every man. Each one divided his own rations for the day to suit himself—some cooked over their own mess in a small kettle at their leisure, while others, disregarding ceremonies, seized their allowance and ate it on an anvil or block. The scene was really graphic, and might remind one of a motley company of foreign emigrants on the deck of a canal-boat, during their visit to the far West. They were allowed to swap rations, exchange commodities, barter, buy and sell, at their pleasure.

Some would swap their rations for cider, and often would get so tipsy they could not work, and would "reel to and fro like a drunken man." Old Guinea, an aged convict, was frequently commissioned by them to go abroad and purchase the *good creature* for them, and would often return laden with two or three gallons. Sometimes, by taking his pay out of the cargo on the road rather freely, his ship would get becalmed, when he would cast anchor by the way side for the night, making the consignees doubly glad upon his safe arrival "in the beautiful morning." Lieutenant *Viets's* tavern, a few rods from the prison, was an especial accommodation, not only for travelers, but for the better sort of convicts. He who could muster the needful change, would prevail on some one of the guard to escort him over the way to the inn of the merry old gentleman, where his necessities and those of his escort were amply supplied at the bar. Many an unfortunate fellow, after his release from bondage, has "cast "a longing look behind" to the old temple of Bacchus, and appreciated the sentiment of the poet :

"Of joys departed never to return,

"How painful the remembrance."

All were allowed to work for themselves or others after their daily tasks were finished, and in that

way some of them actually laid up considerable sums of money. A little cash, or some choice bits of food from people in the neighborhood, procured many a nice article of cabinet ware, a good basket, a gun repaired by the males, or a knit pair of stockings by the female convicts. The writer, when a boy, was often rewarded for a pocket full of fruit with miniature ships, boxes, brass rings, bow and arrows, and the like; all being more valuable for having been made at Newgate, and all showing the particular branch or handicraft to which each had been accustomed. During the day the guard was changed once in two hours, at the sound of the horn, and in the night a guard entered the caverns every two hours and counted the prisoners. The punishments inflicted for offenses and neglect of duty were severe flogging, confinement in stocks in the dungeon, being fed on bread and water during the time, double or treble setts of irons, hanging by the heels, &c., all tending to inflame their revenge and hatred, and seldom were appeals made to their reason or better feelings. From thirty to one hundred were placed together through the night, solitary lodging, as practiced at this day, being regarded as a punishment, rather than a blessing to them.

Their employment consisted in making nails, barrels, shoes, wagons, doing job-work, farming and working on the tread-mill. A building for a tread-mill was erected about the year 1824, for the purpose of grinding grain for prison use, and occasionally for the neighboring inhabitants. A large wheel, between twenty and thirty feet long, was furnished with horizontal flanges as steps, upon which the prisoners trod, and their weight causing the wheel to revolve, furnished the motive power to propel the machinery. Of all labor required of the prisoners, the tread-mill was dreaded the most, and the most stubborn were put to this employment. In extreme cases, one of the *lady birds* was put on the wheel among the men as a punishment, and that was generally sufficient to subdue the most refractory in a very short space of time.\*

The following is from *Kendall's Travels* in the Northern Parts of the United States. He visited Newgate prison in 1807, and says:

On being admitted into the gaol yard, I found a sentry under arms within the gate, and eight

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\* Female convicts were formerly sent to the county jails, but a law was afterwards passed authorizing their commitment to Newgate.



soldiers drawn up in a line in front of the gaoler's house. A bell summoning the prisoners to work had already rung; and in a few moments they began to make their appearance. They came in irregular numbers, sometimes two or three together, and sometimes a single one alone; but whenever one or more were about to cross the yard to the smithery, the soldiers were ordered to present, in readiness to fire. The prisoners were heavily ironed, and secured both by handcuffs and fetters; and being therefore unable to walk, could only make their way by a sort of jump or a hop. On entering the smithery, some went to the sides of the forges, where collars, dependent by iron chains from the roof, were fastened round their necks, and others were chained in pairs to wheelbarrows. The number of prisoners was about forty; and when they were all disposed of in the manner described, sentries were placed within the buildings which contained them. After viewing thus far the economy of this prison, I left it, proposing to visit the cells at a later hour.

This establishment, as I have said, is designed to be, from all its arrangements, an object of terror; and everything is accordingly contrived

to make the life endured in it as burdensome and miserable as possible. In conformity with this idea, the place chosen for the prison is no other than the mouth of a forsaken copper mine, of which the excavations are employed as cells. They are descended by a shaft, which is secured by a trap door, within the prison house, or gaoler's house, which stands upon the mine.

The trap door being lifted up, I went down an iron ladder, perpendicularly fixed to the depth of about fifty feet. From the foot of the ladder a rough, narrow, and low passage descends still deeper, till it terminates at a well of clear water, over which is an air shaft, seventy feet in height, and guarded at its mouth, which is within the gaol yard, by a hatch of iron. The cells are near the well, but at different depths beneath the surface, none perhaps exceeding sixty feet. They are small, rugged, and accommodated with wooden berths, and some straw. The straw was wet, and there was much humidity in every part of this obscure region; but I was assured I ought to attribute this only to the remarkable wetness of the season; that the cells were in general dry, and that they were not found unfavorable to the health of the prisoners.

Into these cells the prisoners are dismissed at four o'clock in the afternoon, every day without exception, and at all seasons of the year. They descend in their fetters and handcuffs, and at four o'clock in the morning they ascend the iron ladder, climbing it as well as they can by the aid of their fettered limbs. It is to be observed that no women are confined here; the law providing that female convicts, guilty of crimes of which men are to be confined in Newgate prison, are to be sent only to the county gaols.

Going again into the workshop or smithery, I found the attendants of the prison delivering pickled pork for dinner of the prisoners. Pieces were given separately to the parties at each forge. They were thrown upon the floor, and left to be washed and boiled in the water used for cooling the iron wrought at the forges. Meat had been distributed in like manner for breakfast. The food of the prison is regulated for each day in the week; and consists in an alternation of pork, beef, and peas, with which last no flesh meat is allowed. Besides the caverns or excavations below, and the gaoler's house above, there are other apartments prepared for the prisoners, and particularly a hospital, of which the neatness

and airiness afford a strong contrast to the other parts of the prison. It was also satisfactory to find that in this hospital there were no sick.

Such is the seat and the scene of punishment provided by Connecticut for criminals not guilty of murder, treason, or either of a few other capital offences. What judgment the reader will pass upon it I do not venture to anticipate; but for myself, I can not get rid of the impression, that without any extraordinary cruelty in its actual operation, there is something very like cruelty in the device and design."

The following is a relation of some of the escapes, and insurrections, which have occurred at various periods in Newgate prison, during a period of nearly forty years.

In November, 1794, a convict by the name of *Newel* escaped from the prison by digging out. It was the practice at that time to allow the prisoners the choice of lodging in the stone cellar under the guard-room (generally known by the name of the stone jug), or of going from thence down into the caverns. During the night a noise below was heard by the guard, and some of them went down among the prisoners to learn the cause, but could discover nothing out of place. In the morning on

counting them, as was customary, one was discovered to be missing. It was found that the prisoners, in some unaccountable manner, had contrived to loosen and pull out one of the large cubic stones on the bottom of the cellar. Through the aperture thus made, they hauled out the earth, pouring it down the shaft, and incredible as it may seem, they dug a hole through gravel, earth and stones, under the floor and wall large enough for a man to crawl out! It appears that when the guard went down among them in the night, the prisoners could hear their arrangements for descending, and instantly replaced the stone and prevented a discovery of their operations. *Newel*, being a very small man, was the only one who succeeded in making his escape; he was never retaken.

In the year 1802 the prisoners rose upon the guard. The commander, *Col. Thomas Sheldon*, was then sick, and soon after died; all the officers and guard were sick also, except *Mr. Dan Forward*, a private. With occasional assistance of people in the neighborhood, the entire charge of the prisoners, at that time amounting to between thirty and forty, devolved upon him. They had heard that many of the officers and privates were sick, and observing



that one man performed nearly the whole duty their suspicions were confirmed, and their plot strengthened. It is not certain whether there was a fair understanding among them; if there was, their courage most miserably failed. While they were passing down into their caverns at the close of the day as usual, and when nearly all of them were going down the ladder, those who remained refused to proceed, and began an attack upon *Forward*, who was standing near. He was a robust, stout fellow, over six feet high, and always ready for any contest; and instead of retreating, he returned their compliments, taking one by the neck and another by the heels, and dashing them down into the shaft upon the rest, who had now begun to come up. The neighbors hearing a scuffle at the prison, ran over to his assistance; but their aid was unnecessary, as *Forward* had vanquished his foes and turned their course into the dungeon. It is very likely that all could have escaped if *Forward* had betrayed the least sign of fear, or had resorted to persuasion.

At this time a very contagious fever raged at the prison, and soon began to spread among the convicts. It was without doubt owing to the filth in and around the prison, and to the want of care and

attention to their cleanliness and comfort. The disease was so virulent, that in order to arrest its progress, a barn was engaged of Capt. *Roswell Phelps*, into which they were to be removed. People in the vicinity were employed to take care of the sick and perform the duties of guard; but all the prisoners except three Irishmen being sick, it was found impracticable to remove them, and after some weeks the disease abated. None of the prisoners, however, died, and no other instance of a general contagion among them ever occurred.

In 1806, on the 1st of November, a rebellion took place which for its results deserves notice. About thirty prisoners in the nail shop had procured keys made from the pewter buttons on their clothes, and with those keys they were to unlock their fetters. It was agreed that one of their number should strike a shovel across a chimney, and that was to be the signal for them all to unlock fetters, and commence an attack upon the guard, to wrest their weapons from them and use them to the best advantage. The signal was given—their fetters were unlocked, and two of their number began the attack. *Aaron Goomer*, a negro, and another, seized an officer by name of *Smith*, who not having time to draw his sword, struck upon them with scab-

bard and all, and while the scuffle was going on, a guard named *Roe*, ran to the spot with his musket, and levelling it at *Goomer*, shot him dead on the spot. Two balls passed through his head, his hair was singed, and his brains scattered around the shop. His comrade seeing his fate, returned to his post. The courage of the rest "oozed out at their 'fingers' ends," for not one of them dared to stir from their places, although their shackles were unfastened. Had a well concerted attack been made and sustained by the rebels at this moment, they would have commanded the prison in five minutes, and could have put to death every officer and private in their quarters.

Three brothers by the name of *Barnes*, natives of North Haven, were imprisoned together for the crime of burglary, in 1803. These were the most active and finest looking men in the prison. They were very ingenious and adroit, and would construct almost any mechanism required of them. These were the fellows who planned the insurrection before spoken of, and they made the pewter keys for unlocking the fetters. They were experienced in making keys, and could once, it is said, open any store in New Haven; but their ingenuity at length brought them to an unfortunate place.

The fact is surprising that the same three committed the same offence again, and were convicted and imprisoned again just three years after! These brothers were regarded by the officers as extremely dangerous, and for various offences in the prison, they were kept bound with two sets of fetters during the day, and also chained to the block, besides being sometimes chained by their necks to a beam overhead, and at night they were put into the dungeons, and their feet made fast in stocks.

One of the convicts named *Parker*, had been famous for counterfeiting the character of *priest*. He had been known to have many violent attacks of pretended piety, generally appropriating to himself the name and office of an unordained minister, a part which he managed with a great deal of dexterity, and commonly without suspicion on the part of his *dear hearers*, that he was an imposter. His exhortations had been terrible to all *stony hearts*, and where his preaching lacked mental light or logic, he always had ready supply of bombast and bodily contortions.

Another game it is said he performed to admiration. When he could hear of the absence of a long lost friend in a family, he would appear and claim

the identical relationship himself, and act all the tragedy or romantic pathos of a joyful return.

In one instance he claimed to be the stray husband of a disconsolate woman, and was received by her with all the attachment supposable at such a happy reunion. His real identity was not discovered until in taking off his shoes, the lady remarked that he possessed more toes than belonged to him — her husband having lost one by amputation ; he replied with ready adroitness that the lost toe *had grown out again* since his long absence. This determined the question as to his identity, and he at once received such a summary ejection, as is best administered by a woman of sensible spirit.

How astonishing such adroitness ! to be preacher and “steal the livery of Heaven to serve the devil in ;” to be brother, son, or husband, and appearing more natural, so to speak, in a fictitious garb, than in his real character. When his term of service expired, and as he was passing out of the prison gate, one of the convicts exclaimed, “wo to the inhabitants of the earth for the devil has gone out among them.”

Prince *Mortimer*, a prisoner, lived to a very ad-



vanced age. He died at the prison in Wethersfield, in 1834, supposed to be 110 years old; he commonly went by the name of *Guinea*, which was probably given to him on account of his native country. His complexion did not in the least belie his name, for surely he was the personification of *darkness visible*. His life was a tale of misfortunes, and his fate won the commiseration of all who knew him. He was captured on the coast of Guinea by a slaver when a boy; was transported in a filthy slave ship to Connecticut, then a slave colony, and was sold to one of the *Mortimer* family in Middletown. He was a servant to different officers in the Revolutionary war; had been sent on errands by General *Washington*, and said he had "straddled many a cannon when fired by the Americans at the British troops." For the alleged crime of poisoning his master he was doomed to Newgate prison in 1811, for life. He appeared a harmless, clever old man, and as his age and infirmities rendered him a burden to the keepers, they frequently tried to induce him to quit the prison. Once he took his departure, and after rambling around in search of some one he formerly knew, like the aged prisoner released from the Bastille, he returned to the gates of the prison, and begged to be readmitted

to his dungeon home, and in prison ended his unhappy years!

*Samuel Smith*, alias *Samuel Corson*, a native of New Hampshire, while confined at Newgate for passing counterfeit money, wrote an account of his own life, which was published in 1826. He stated many queer circumstances about himself and the various paths of crime which he had followed through life. It appears he had been a recruiting officer in the service, and was stationed at Plattsburg, N. Y. One of his pranks is worthy of being recorded in his own words.

One evening, I, together with a number of non-commissioned officers, took a walk down town for our amusement, and on our return home, I saw by a light through the window of a Mr. I.'s house, something laying very carefully rolled up, on a table under the window. I also perceived that there was no person in the room. I now thinking to get something rare and fresh, in order for our suppers, lifted up the window, and on putting my hand in, felt by its ribs and size, enough to convince me that it was a good *roaster*, and I of course made it a lawful prize. Putting it under my coat, I said nothing about it to my comrades, until our

arrival at my quarters, where I invited then to accept of some refreshment. After striking a light and introducing a good bottle of brandy, I thought it the most convenient time to uncover my booty, in order to satisfy our craving appetites. At this moment, all eyes were gazing at the mysterious prize, when lo! to my utter surprise and astonishment, it had turned from a *roaster* to a (dead) *colored child*. You can hardly imagine, dear readers, what were my feelings at this critical moment, not only from exposition among my fellow officers, nor disappointment in my intended and contemplated supper, but also in the thoughts of robbing some unhappy parents of their darling child. I need not add, that they had a hearty fit of laughter, at my expense, whilst my wits were all to work in order to devise some manner of getting out of the hobble, and restoring the infant undiscovered, to its proper owners. This I thought best to do, by returning it immediately to Mr. I.'s house, and in order to accomplish this, I took it again under my coat and repaired to the main guard, to obtain liberty to return to the village. On asking Lieutenant Ellison (who was officer of the guard) he discovered something white hanging below my coat, and insisted on knowing what it was; when I had of course to

reveal the whole secret to him; he also laughed heartily and told me to go on. When I returned to Mr. I.'s, the house was filled with both men and women, who, having missed the child, did not know what to think of its mysterious flight. I had at first thought of leaving it at the door, but fearing the numerous hogs in the vicinity would destroy it, I altered my mind, and taking it by the heels, threw it into the room among them. At this crisis, how must they have felt, to see it reappear amongst them, and feeling at the same time, the effects of innumerable particles of glass, which flew in all directions over the room. Their screams were indescribable—by which, in a few moments, not only the house, but the street was filled with astonished spectators; all anxious to know what was the matter. On my return home, I met many repairing to the house, and on some of them enquiring what was the matter up the street, I told them that I believed there was a crazy man in the house of Mr. I. On arriving at the barracks all was still, and I heard nothing more respecting it for some days.

A convict, by the name of *Newman*, was a noted prison breaker. Although he perhaps could not

boast of unlocking, scaling, and digging out of so many prisons as the famous *Stephen Burrows*, yet his character, as it was written, compared very well. He escaped in various ways from several prisons in Canada and the United States, but this one, he said, "was the hardest and most secure prison he ever entered." However, he contrived several plans for escaping; once he feigned himself to be dead. He was accordingly laid out as a corpse, and preparations made for his interment; but before finding his carcase firmly under ground, he concluded it best to have his resurrection, and at length ventured to disclose to his attendants the important fact, that he would feel quite as comfortable in his long home, if he could only get the breath out of his body and make his heart stop beating. He often pretended to have fits, requiring medical aid, and what was of more consequence, the aid of a little *Brandy* or *Madeira*. He pretended to raise blood from his lungs whenever he wished to draw sympathy from the guard, until it was discovered that it was a substance made to order by chewing pieces of *red brick*, or by pricking his gums. He would vary his pulse by pounding his elbows and other violent means, and thus deceive the physician. He said he could reduce his flesh in



ten days by sucking a copper cent in his mouth each night, and swallowing the saliva, which destroys the juices of the body, and produces premature decay. He was continually apprehensive that he would yet be taken back to England, where he said he should have to answer for the crime of *murder*, as a thousand pounds reward for his arrest stood against him. His chief desire was to avoid labor at the nail block, but he was finally cured of his tricks with the threat of having the brand of *Rogue* set on his forehead.

It was frequently customary for farmers and others in the neighborhood to employ the prisoners in their fields, being accompanied at such times by some of the guard. They also performed a great amount of labor in quarrying stone for the prison buildings, and other uses. Six of them on one occasion were sent out a short distance to quarry stone, in charge of one officer and two privates. With no fetters, and a fair field before them, they perceived the chance a good one for escape. Their plan was to get their keepers near together, to employ their attention about some trifle, and quickly seize their arms. Accordingly they persuaded their keepers to peel off some birch bark and make caps for them, and while the cap

business was going on, and the attention of the *cap makers* was occupied in their vocation, their weapons were seized in an instant; the refugees, dividing the spoils and forming themselves into squads, quickly scampered over the hills. The forlorn guards retreated to the prison, told their sad tale to the captain, and at once received their discharge. The prisoners were all retaken; some in the western part of the state for stealing; the others stole a boat in Connecticut river, and steering down the stream leisurely, were captured in East Hartford meadows.

The wit of some of the convicts is well illustrated in an anecdote of one of them, an Irishman named *Dublin*. He was at his work making nails, when at one time Maj. *Humphrey*, who then commanded, came along, and said to him, "*Dublin*, your nails are defective; the heads are not made alike." "Ah," said he, "Major, if our heads had 'all been made alike, faith, I should not have been 'caught here.'" *Dublin* afterwards tried to escape by leaping over the paling. He succeeded in getting upon the top, and in leaping down, one of the iron spikes with which the enclosure was mounted, caught in his fetters and turned him, as he said, "tother end up." For some time he hung sus-

pended, head downwards, between heaven and earth, seventeen feet high, until at last, after tearing off his finger ends and nails in his struggles he turned himself back sufficiently to disentangle his feet, when he fell to the ground, and soon scampered away among the swamps and bushes. There he remained until aroused by the unwelcome calls of his stomach, when he ventured out in the night, and opening a window in the neighborhood, he appropriated to himself a good loaf of bread and a cheese, and again hid himself for two days. In trying to break his fetters with a stone, he was overheard by one of the guard, *Michael Holcomb*, who called to him, "*Dublin*, what are you doing?" "I am driving the sheep out of my pasture," said he. "But *Dublin* you must come along with me." "Faith, *Misthur Holcomb*, surely this is not me," replied *Dublin*. He was taken to the prison, where *Holcomb* received the reward of \$10 which had been offered.

In the spring of 1822, there was a rebellion of a very serious nature. In the fall previous, between thirty and forty criminals were added to the number in prison, and this reinforcement was composed of rough and hard characters. This increase was in consequence of legislative enactments transfer-

ing many from the county jails, which were all constructed of wood, and very insecure. The terms of sentence were mostly long, which served to fire them with desperation. The same fall a plot was set on foot by them for an outbreak, but it was discovered and defeated. The next spring they perfected their plans of operation in a most masterly manner. The insurgents comprised the whole number in the prison, amounting to more than one hundred. Their force was stronger than ever before, and the number of guards less, being at the time only seventeen. The captain, *Tuller*, was absent through the night, also one sergeant, one private, and the cook. The intention of the rebels was to rise in all the shops, *en masse*, at a given signal to knock down the officers, take their weapons, and get possession of the guard house where the arms were kept, and then to take the sole command of the works. The signal was given in the nail shop by a blow from a shovel, and officer *Roe* was instantly knocked down senseless with a bar of iron. They seized his cutlass, and then attacked a guard ; but so many being engaged upon him at once, pulling different ways, that they did not succeed in getting his musket. Officer *Case* in the meantime stationed a sentinel at the

door of the guard-room, with a loaded musket and bayonet charged, which being noticed by the prisoners in the other shops, prevented their advancing to the attack, and seemed to dishearten them at once. The bold rebels in the nail shop kept up the struggle, and sledges, spikes, and other missiles flew in all directions, and confusion and uproar reigned throughout. At this critical moment officer *Griswold* arrived at the prison, and proceeded directly to the scuffle at the musket. He drew his pistol, fired upon and wounded a prisoner. *Roe* by this time had come to his senses; he arose from the ground and shot another, when presently several guards presented their cocked muskets, which immediately quelled the assailants. The general cry of the prisoners was now for quarters: "Spare us! Don't kill us!—don't kill us!" The captain soon after arrived, and bound the ringleaders in double irons.

*Ephraim Shaylor*, one of the guard, was sent out to accompany two prisoners, an Indian and a white man, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the prison, where they were employed in reaping. At the close of the day, on their return, the prisoners requested permission to gather some apples and carry them home, to which *Shaylor* consented; he also was



engaged in picking them up, when they sprang upon his back, crushed him down, and secured his weapons, a cutlass and fowling piece. One of them took a large stone and was about to smash out his brains, but the other dissented, and they concluded it best to take him to a copse of bushes near by and there dispatch him. One followed at his back holding him by his sword belt with cutlass in hand, and the other marched at a respectable distance, with musket charged, in true military style, and onward they marched towards the fatal spot. Our hero now concluded that his final hour had come, and thought if he must die, there might be at least a *choice in the mode* ; and considering that a shot in the *back* at such a crisis would be no dishonor, on a sudden he slipped the belt over his head and made for the prison, while the victors were disputing between themselves which should take the musket and fire upon him. *Shaylor* reached the prison in safety, rallied several others and pursued them, but they were not to be found.

After their victory, it appears that the Indian proposed to the white man to break each other's fetters, to which the other agreed, and after those of the Indian were broken, the crafty liar took speedy leave of his comrade without reciprocating

the favor, thus proving that the old adage in this instance, is not true, "there is honor among rogues." The white man secreted himself in the mountains through the day, and at night went to a black smith's shop in Suffield, and with a chisel cut off his fetters. Both were afterwards taken for crime and recommitted to Newgate, where their condition and that of their enemy as victor and vanquished was strangely reversed, and *Shaylor* had an opportunity of enjoying his right of laying upon their bare backs, a few keen lashes.

Mr. *Shaylor* afterwards held a commission in the army, was engaged in the battle of Bridgewater, and was wounded. He now draws a pension, and is a respected citizen of Green Bay, Michigan.

A thief by name of *James Smith*, a native of Groton, Conn., was imprisoned for horse-stealing, in 1822, for the term of six years. He had been a great counterfeiter, and circumstances which have recently come to light are evidence that he had been a *barbarous pirate*. The piratical crew had sailed in a French vessel, and after obtaining much plunder, fearing to enter any port without regular papers, they sunk their vessel on the coast of North Carolina, carried their specie in three boats and buried it all, except one large trunk full,

on the beach in Currituck county. In corroboration of the above it appears that while he was a prisoner in Newgate, he offered *David Foster*, a guard, \$200 if he would assist him to escape, telling him he had a great quantity of specie buried on the coast of North Carolina. *Foster* refused, but promised to say nothing about it. This he testified in court when afterwards called upon as a witness. *Smith* in a few months afterwards escaped from prison, and as was supposed, by bribery. The following respecting him is related by Mr. *Benjamin Taylor*, a planter now living in North Carolina. *Smith* and seven or eight others came to his house in the year 1822, and hired of him a room; they employed him with four of his slaves to cross Currituck sound, and obtained a large trunk, very heavy, and returned to his house, where they all remained about one week. While there he saw them divide a large sum of specie among themselves, and *Smith*, appearing to be at their head, took the largest sum. They were arrested on suspicion of being robbers, but for want of sufficient evidence discharged. They all then left for Norfolk, Va., except *Smith*, who remained several weeks. During this time he often appeared to be deranged, would talk to himself, and told

the servants that he "had made many a man walk "the plank overboard." He then went to the north, and was imprisoned at Newgate for stealing a horse. After his escape from prison as above stated, he returned to the house of Mr. *Taylor* and staid about one week. While there he employed several men in digging on the beach. Their search was fruitless, for the storms and waves had dashed upon the beach too long, and it is supposed swept the treasures into the ocean. He then went away to some place unknown to Mr. *Taylor*. It now appears from the prison records, that he came to Connecticut, where he was taken and again sentenced for twenty-three years on *four* indictments for horse-stealing. His last home on earth was in prison, and there he died in 1836.

The last tragedy developed at Newgate, took place on the night previous to the removal to Wethersfield. *Abel N. Starkey*, an ingenious criminal, was the victim. He was a native of Roxbury, Mass., was committed in 1824 for twenty years, for the crime of making counterfeit money. By his ingenuity and industry at the prison he had amassed \$100 in cash. On the night of September 28th, 1827, being the day previous to the

removal of the prisoners to Wethersfield, he requested permission to lodge in the dungeon, which was granted to him. From some cause which has never been explained, the hatch which covered one of the wells communicating with the cavern, was unfastened. During the night he laid hold of the well rope and ascended upon it part of the way up, when it broke and precipitated him into the water, and a bucket fell upon his head; the noise was heard above, and he was found dead. His feet were tied together with a handkerchief for the purpose, as is supposed, of assisting him in climbing the rope. Only \$50 were found in his possession; the balance was probably the price paid for unfastening the hatch.

It would seem that Newgate prison, in the course of its duration, had contained all which was various in character, determined in crime, and deep in degradation. It compassed all ages from boyhood to extreme old age; both sexes, colors, and different occupations; students from college, and others unable to read or write. Those skilled in phrenology might have had a rich treat in exploring the bumps on some of those hard heads, and the solving of their characteristics



would have afforded amusement and perhaps instruction.

Seriously, it is difficult to account for the wayward inclination of some of them, especially those who were imprisoned a number of times and for the same kind of offence each term, unless it can be accounted for on phrenological principles. It may be said to indicate only a depraved heart, but a depraved heart must have a strange kind of head to run repeatedly into the same crime and get back to the same prison. But I leave it to those who understand the science to defend the ground, presuming that the truth of their cause will insure them a triumphant issue.

When the number and difference of characters kept in that prison is considered, and the treatment which they received is appreciated, it will at once be seen how unavailing the system must have been for their security or their reformation. The custom of fastening their feet to bars of iron to which chains were attached from their necks, chaining them to the block, and likewise to a beam above, while at their work, scourging their bodies like beasts, &c., taught them to look upon themselves in a measure as they were looked upon by others, objects of dread, and possessing cha-

racters more like fiends than men. With such treatment, reformation must have been, and was, entirely out of the question. The system was very well suited to turn men into devils, but it could never transform devils into men. Instead of putting them in cells separately at night, where they might have opportunity for reflection, they were suffered to congregate together, good and bad, young and old, to brew mischief, and to teach new vices to those unpractised. Their midnight revels, as may be supposed, were often like the howling in a pandemonium of tigers, banishing sleep and forbidding rest.

It is not desired that these remarks, however, should be so construed as to impute blame to the officers or guard of the prison. Far from it. Although they were many times in fault, still as the prison was constructed, and in the way that service was required of them, it was impossible to preserve that degree of order and discipline so essential to success. They had no approved system of prison discipline to study, no correct views of punishment connected with reformation were at that day generally known, and but few branches of business were thought of, which would yield a fair compensation and save the State from cost.

The insecurity of Newgate prison, and the constant burthen upon the treasury of the state for its support, excited a very strong discussion in the public prints, and in the legislature, for several years. The subject of a new prison on a more modern plan, and the abandonment of the old one raised a powerful party in its support. Among the foremost in this enterprise was *Martin Welles*, Esq., who labored zealously for its accomplishment. The proposition was opposed by others living in the vicinity of Newgate, among whom was Maj. *Orson P. Phelps*, an enterprising contractor, who had furnished the prison with beef, and other necessities. The Major indulged his ready poetic wit, on one occasion, by the following sentiment :

"O'er the dark side on Copper hill,

"*Martin Welles* has stopped their treading mill.

"'Tis ten to one if he don't miss it,

"For Doctor *Buck* can't deal out physic."

He was well answered by the author of another couplet :

"Say what you will, old Newgate helps

"The beef contractor, Major *Phelps*."

The following song was composed by Dr. *Eliphalet Buck*, and sung on the occasion of com-

pleting the walls of Newgate Prison in 1802. Dr. *Buck* was for many years the established physician for Newgate, and was a complete embodiment of fun as well as physic, but had not made the art of poetry a study, evidently:

Attend, all ye villains, that live in the state,  
Consider the walls that encircle Newgate,  
Your place of abode, if justice were done.  
The assembly in wisdom, when they did behold  
The first wooden pickets, grown ruined and old,  
They granted a sum to the wise overseers,  
Which, amply sufficient to make the repairs,  
And they did decide to repair with hewn stone.

In the year one thousand eight hundred and two,  
A party collected, to split and to hew.  
Their names in my song, shall last with the wall;  
First, Lieutenant Barber the job undertakes;  
Beneath his strong labor, old Copper hill shakes,  
With his workmen in order, the stone for to square,  
And others strong burdens with cheerfulness bear,  
While each one delights to attend to his call.

The next in the column is sage Pettibone,  
Whose skill in the work is exceeded by none.  
To handle the gavel, or poise the great maul;  
With him senior Jared an equal part bears,  
And in the hard labor he equally shares:  
While Gillett, and Holcomb, and Cosset appear,  
And Hillyer, all anxious the fabric to rear,  
To lay the foundation—to strengthen the Wall.

Bold Harrington, Goddard, and Lieutenant Reed,  
Each lend their assistance the work to proceed.

Perhaps there are others, whose names I don't call,  
With hammers, and chizzels, and crow-bars, and gads,  
And Wanrax, with other poor prisoner lads,  
To hand up the mortar, or carry the hod;  
Which may, to some strangers appear very odd,  
To think the poor culprits help build their own Wall.

November the tenth, for the good of the state,  
They finished the wall and completed the gate,

Which for numerous years may swing and not fall.  
Then each one returns to his sweetheart or wife,  
With plenty of cash to support them in life;  
With joy and with gladness for what they had done,  
In hewing and squaring, and laying the stone,  
Not wholly unmindful of building the Wall.

Now here's to the landlord, before that we go,  
We wish him success, and his lady also,

For their kind assistance to great and to small,  
For the benefit had from his plentiful bar,  
And the free intercourse which produces no jar;  
To him and his neighbors, and every good man,  
Who always we've wanted to lend us a hand  
To drive on the work, and finish the Wall.

Now last, to the prisoners, we make this remark,  
Who are left to the keeping of Commodore Clark ?

It may be of service, to one and to all,  
Repine not too much, though your lot may seem hard,  
You've a judicious keeper, and well disposed guard;  
If you behave well you have nothing to dread—  
You've beef, pork, and sauce, and a plenty of bread,  
So behave well, and get the outside of the Wall.



Some of the prisoners were made to assist in building the wall, and it appears that they were permitted to participate in the *jollification* after it was completed. An Irish prisoner, named *Patrick*, offered upon the occasion the following toast :

“ Here’s to Lieut. *Barber*’s great wall—May it be “like the walls of Jericho, and *tumble down at the sound of a ram’s horn.*”

The toast given by *Dublin* was equally sarcastic, viz :

“ Here’s health to the Captain and all the rest “of the prisoners.”



CONNECTICUT STATE PRISON.

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The present Penitentiary of Connecticut is situated on the margin of a beautiful cove in the town of Wethersfield, about three miles from Hartford, and is regarded as a penitentiary of the *first order*. Its location, its construction, its financial management and discipline, have won the admiration of every state in the Union. It has proved to the world that criminal punishment can be made a safeguard to society, a protection to the honest industry of the people, and also a benefit to the moral and physical condition of the convicts. The prison limits comprise about one and a half acres of ground, which is enclosed by a wall of hard sand stone, 18 feet high, 3 feet thick at its base, and inclining to  $1\frac{1}{3}$  feet at the top. Within and adjoining this wall, are buildings of the same material, and of brick, used as the warden's apartment, hospital and chapel, and for workshops and cells. In the yard is a cistern under ground for water, of the capacity of 100 hogsheads, and a fire engine is attached to the premi-

ses. A steam engine of forty horse power is connected with the shops for propelling machinery, necessary to carry on the various branches of business. A portion of the cell building is white-washed with lime each day, which purifies the air, and gives to the lodging apartments an appearance of neatness. Each convict enjoys that *blessing of punishment, a separate cell at night*, and no one is allowed during the day to look at any visitor, or to catch the eye of his fellow, but all are intent upon the business before them. A library of suitable books, comprising 1500 volumes, is provided for such as can read, and those who can not are instructed by the chaplain, who is assisted in his good work occasionally by the warden and other officers. The library is highly prized by the convicts, who spend many of their solitary hours in reading, and the benefits have been so apparent, that the state has generously appropriated annually \$100 for the purchase of books for their use. Male convicts are employed at present in the manufacture of mechanics' tools, boot and shoe making, and burnishing. The females are under the charge of a matron, and are employed in making and mending clothes, washing, cooking, &c. The services of the male convicts are let by the war-

den to companies or contractors, who pay monthly a stipulated price per day for the services of each prisoner, and no able bodied person is exempt from labor. This system has been found to work well, pecuniarily, and the average net profits to the state, above the current expenses, officers' salaries, &c., amount to about \$2000 per annum. This is believed to be the only state prison in the Union which meets its entire expenses and leaves a surplus to the state.

It is interesting to observe how much depends in the success of a prison, upon skill and discipline in its management. For seventeen years previous to the removal of the prison in 1827, the annual tax upon the state treasury for the support of Newgate was over \$7000. The present institution has paid for all its buildings and fixtures, and seventeen acres of land. It has paid \$7000 to the counties of the state, for the erection of county jails on the improved penitentiary system, and \$7000 to the school districts in the state for school apparatus, thus causing ignorance and crime to help educate the rising generation. It has presented to the Boston prison discipline society \$1000, by order of the legislature, besides a surplus to a large amount for the state treasury.

No convict has ever escaped from this prison. Its safe construction and the active vigilance of its officers, would seem to banish all hopes of escape, and render every attempt worse than useless. Strict order and discipline are apparent in every department, and yet without any vain show of power. No bars or fetters are worn; no armed sentinel is seen, except upon the two towers; no muskets, swords, or pistols, are carried daily within the walls, and only within the guard room are any weapons of murder to be seen.

The first warden of this prison was *Moses C. Pilsbury*,\* a former warden of the New Hampshire

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\* *Moses C. Pilsbury* was a thirty and forty miles on foot, native of Newbury, Mass. he arrived at Newburyport, where he engaged to work for a month at haying. For this he received eight dollars, to which, by working nights, he added two dollars more. At the end of the month, therefore, he was in possession of ten silver dollars; and this was the capital of the man, who subsequently acquired a good education and a handsome property; who faithfully served his country as an officer in the last war with England,



prison, and to his skill and experience much was due in connection with the Boston prison discipline society, in the first arrangement of the institution. He continued in that capacity about three years, and was succeeded by his son, *Amos Pilsbury*,\* who for about seventeen years (except a short interval) remained as the warden, and he continued and perfected the admirable system of discipline so well begun. It is not in a *pecuniary* respect only that the Connecticut prison has been successful. It has, in a majority of cases, improved the moral and intellectual condition of its inmates, where any improvement of the debased

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and who, since that time until his death, was engaged in public business, discharging all his duties with accuracy and fidelity. He was the first warden of a prison who caused the prisoners to earn more than their own support; and, to his honor be it said, he was the first prison-keeper who introduced the practice of reading the Bible daily to the prisoners assembled. In the language of a celebrated writer on prison discipline, "Mr. *Pilsbury* was the founder and

"head of improvements in our  
"prisons, at least in the New  
"England states." He died at  
Derry, New Hampshire, in  
June, 1848, aged seventy  
years.

\* *Amos Pilsbury*, so celebrated as a prison-keeper and successful manager of convicts, was the son of *Moses C. Pilsbury*, and was born at Londonderry, New Hampshire, February 8, 1805. He attended school and worked on the farm until his thirteenth year,

heart was possible. It has inaugurated a system of discipline the most complete and perfect which has ever been known, or adopted, and it is now universally acknowledged as a *model penitentiary*. Many improvements in buildings, and machinery,

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when his father, having been appointed warden of the New Hampshire state prison, removed with his family to Concord, in that state. At fourteen years of age, he was apprenticed to the tanning and currying business, in a neighboring town, and served a regular apprenticeship of four years, remaining with his employer until the failure of the concern. In April, 1824, he accepted the offer of his father to become a watchman or guard of the prison, of which the latter was warden, and here commenced his career in the management and government of prisons, for which he is so justly celebrated, and which has continued to be the chosen business of his life. At this time he was but nineteen years of age. Having performed the duty of guard for about one year, he was next, with the approbation of the governor and council, who were inspectors of the prison, appointed deputy warden. On the resignation of his father in June, 1826, Mr. *Pilsbury*, at the request of the governor and council, remained with his successor until the December following. In November, 1826, Mr. *Pilsbury* was married to Miss *Emily Heath*, and continued to reside in Concord and its vicinity until the summer of the next year, at which time his father and himself were solicited to take charge of the new state prison then erecting at Wethersfield. In July, 1827, he commenced as deputy under his father as principal warden of that institution. The younger Mr. *Pilsbury* removed the prisoners from the old, or Newgate pri-

have recently been made under the supervision of the present efficient warden, *Daniel Webster, Esq.*, who has kindly furnished statistical information of the present state of the prison.

The whole number of commitments to this

son, to the new establishment, which was completed in the fall of that year. *Moses C. Pilsbury* continued warden of this prison until April, 1830, when his son was appointed to fill his place. Gov. *Peters*, in his message to the legislature, May, 1832, says: "The friends of the penitentiary system, have great reason to rejoice at the flattering results of the Connecticut state prison during the past year. After paying every expense incurred for the support and management of the establishment, there remains a balance in favor of the institution of \$8,713.53." A personal difficulty, which had occurred soon after his appointment, with one of the directors, and which had been very annoying and unpleasant to Mr. *Pilsbury*, resulted in his removal from

office in September, 1832. A thorough investigation was, at his own request, immediately instituted into the affairs of the prison and its management, by a committee appointed by the legislature of the state. The committee made a report to the legislature at their next session; and Mr. *Pilsbury* was not only reappointed, but a resolution was passed directing the treasurer of the state to pay to him the expenses he had incurred in defending himself against the charges of his opponents, and four hundred dollars in addition thereto, for his own time. He was reappointed in June, 1837, having been absent just nine months. The condition of the prison during his absence, and at the time of his return, may be gathered from the report of the directors,

prison, including 81 from Newgate, is 1733. The whole number in confinement, April 1st, 1859, 203.

May, 1834. During Mr. *Pilsbury's* absence one of the keepers had been murdered by two of the prisoners, for which they were afterwards tried and executed. From that time to January, 1845, nearly twelve years, Mr. *Pilsbury* remained as warden, uninterrupted by the political changes that frequently took place, notwithstanding that he was during the whole of that time surrounded by politicians who manifested great hostility towards him.

Mr. *Pilsbury* having made the Wethersfield prison superior to any similar establishment in the country, next turned his attention to the improvement of the county jails. He encouraged the building of new prisons in each of the counties of the state, and through his recommendations, the legislature authorized him to pay from the *surplus earnings* of the state prison, one

thousand dollars to such counties in the state as should build a jail on the plan of the new prison at Hartford; and he soon had the satisfaction of knowing that Connecticut possessed, not only the MODEL STATE PRISON, but the best county jails in the country.

We afterwards find Mr. *Pilsbury* engaged in improving the condition of the insane poor, especially that of the *insane prisoners* under his care. In a communication to the directors in 1841, he suggested that the surplus earnings of the state prison should be employed in erecting and supporting an establishment for *criminal* and *pauper* lunatics. This was sent to the legislature and referred to a *joint committee*; from the able report of which is the following extract: "If the state should adopt the humane suggestion of our respected warden of the state prison, which has been refer-



## The places of their nativity are as follows :

Connecticut .....	96	Delaware, Tennessee, Ohio and	
Massachusetts .....	10	Texas, 1 each .....	4
Rhode Island .....	9	England .....	4
New Hampshire .....	1	Ireland .....	26
Vermont .....	1	France .....	4
New York .....	33	Germany .....	7
New Jersey .....	2	Island St. Jago .....	1
Maryland .....	2		
Pennsylvania .....	3		203

"red to your committee, and  
 "which does honor to his head  
 "and his heart, the additional  
 "sum which would be required  
 "to sustain the institution  
 "hereafter, would be compara-  
 "tively small indeed."

A desperate fellow by the name of *Scott* alias *Teller*, was sent to Wethersfield, for fifteen years; he had previously been confined in Sing Sing and other prisons. He was determined not to work or submit to any rules. Of course Capt. *Pilsbury* treated him accordingly. He very soon cut one of his hands nearly off, on purpose to avoid labor; but his wound was immediately attended to, and in less than one hour afterwards, he found himself turning a large crank with *one*

hand; it was then that he declared he would murder the warden on the very first opportunity. Soon after this, the regular barber of the prison being sick, and *Scott* who had, it was said, when young, worked at that trade, was directed by the deputy warden to take the place of the barber, and shave the prisoners throughout the establishment. Mr. *Pilsbury* on going into the shop soon afterwards, was told by one of the assistants, that the prisoners did not like to be shaved by this man, he had behaved very bad since he had been an inmate, and they were afraid of him. Mr. *Pilsbury* immediately took the chair and directed *Scott* to shave him. From that moment he became



### Ages of the convicts at the time of their conviction :

Over 15 and less than 20 there were .....	31
“ 20 “ “ 25 “ “ .....	65
“ 25 “ “ 30 “ “ .....	46
“ 30 “ “ 35 “ “ .....	21
“ 35 “ “ 40 “ “ .....	11
“ 40 “ “ 45 “ “ .....	12
“ 45 “ “ 50 “ “ .....	8
“ 50 “ “ 55 “ “ .....	7
“ 55 “ “ 60 “ “ .....	2

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one of the best behaved convicts in the prison, and remained so until Mr. *Pilsbury* left it, in November, 1832. Soon after the appointment of a new warden, *Scott* tried to escape, and murdered one of the keepers. For this crime he was hung at Hartford, in 1833. The late Hon. *Roger M. Sherman*, in a report which has been published, speaking of the Connecticut state prison, makes the following remarks: “Instead of being a charge on the treasury, it is a source of revenue. In ten years the net earnings, above all expenses, have been sufficient to pay every expense of its erection, sup-

port and management, and leave a surplus on hand of over \$10,000. The state, however, is greatly indebted to the Messrs. *Pilsbury* for their superior skill in conducting the institution. By one who was competent to judge, and had made extensive inquiry in this country and in Europe, they have been pronounced the best prison keepers in the world.”

From 1810 to 1827 (seventeen years), the money drawn from the state treasury for the expenses attending the support of the old Newgate prison, over and above its earnings, had been upwards of one

## Crimes for which the prisoners were sentenced :

Murder .....	4	Burglary and horse stealing .....	2
Murder, 2d degree.....	7	Burglary .....	63
Attempt at murder.....	2	Burglary and theft.....	3
Manslaughter.....	5	Theft .....	28
Assault with intent to kill.....	5	Bigamy.....	1
Rape .....	4	Bestiality .....	2
Attempt at rape.....	3	Felony.....	1
Arson .....	2	Attempt to poison.....	1
Incest .....	3	Perjury.....	2
Adultery .....	2	Burning barn.....	3
Perjury, with intent to take life..	1	Burning factory.....	2
Forgery .....	5	Stealing from person.....	2
Robbing U. S. Mail.....	3	Obstructing railway.....	3
Counterfeiting 3 cent pieces.....	1	Forging pension papers.....	1
Passing counterfeit money.....	5	Forging land warrants.....	2
Abusing female child.....	1	Horse stealing.....	7
Assault with intent to rob.....	2	High crimes and misdemeanors..	1
Abandoning child.....	1	Stealing horse and wagon.....	1
Attempt at rape and stealing....	1	Burglary and breaking jail.....	4
Attempt to burn court house....	1	Miscellaneous crimes.....	16

*hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.* From a report made to the legislature of Connecticut, in May, 1844, by the directors of the state prison, it appeared, that in the *seventeen* years it had been in operation (during three of which it was under the government of his father), the income or profits thereof, after defraying every expense for the support and management of the convicts, amounted in the aggregate to

the enormous sum of *ninety-three thousand dollars.* After having directed its concerns and been connected with its management nearly *eighteen* years, Mr. *Pilsbury* left the Wethersfield prison on the first day of January, 1845. For financial prosperity and every other excellence, it had not at that time its equal in America. Mr. *Pilsbury* then moved to Albany, on the invitation of the commissioners appointed by

One convict is in the prison for the fourth time, and one year intervenes between each sentence, and each term has been for two years. The average number of U. S. criminals here is 8; average number of female convicts, 11; average number of the whole, 210; the average length of all the sentences, 4 years and 2 months. About 20 are sentenced for forgeries, averaging in amounts about \$100 each, and it may be remarked that here, as elsewhere, forgers for large amounts—upper-crust forgers for thousands, are very apt to escape the meshes of the law and go unwhipped of justice.

In all prisons and penitentiaries, there are criminals possessing some strange and unaccounta-

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the legislature of the state of New York to construct a penitentiary. He engaged with them in that enterprise, and when the buildings there were so far completed as to allow the confinement of prisoners therein, was, without solicitation on his part, unanimously appointed by the city and county authorities its superintendent for three years, with almost unlimited powers. Mr. *Pilsbury* is still at the head of the Albany institution although serving at the same time as General Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police in the city of New York, a most arduous and responsible position. As such he introduced important reforms; but soon resigned the office, to avoid the annoyance of politicians, having shown his capability of putting the police of that great metropolis in an efficient and honorable position.

ble characteristics; but whatever their propensities, they are generally influenced by one motive, which is common to all of them, and that is a desire to escape from confinement. But the Connecticut penitentiary has furnished one singular exception to this general rule, or rather the rule has been transposed in one singular case. A young female was committed in 1853 for the term of four years, for the crime of horse stealing. She served out her term, was duly discharged, and presented with her former articles of clothing, &c.; and with the present usually given to all at their departure, of two dollars in money. She soon obtained employment at housework in the neighborhood, and for a while appeared to behave herself well; but at length her former habit of thieving predominated, and some of her pilfering was detected by the family. *Abby Jane* (for that is her name) took her leave, but soon privately returned, and stealing a horse blanket from Genl. *Welles*, she ensconced herself under his barn floor, which she appropriated as her lodging apartment, with the stolen blanket for her coverlid. Here she lived for several days, subsisting upon whatever plunder she could get, and by milking the cows in the neighborhood in the

night, retreating each day to her kennel under the barn. But the remembrance of prison life had such fascinating charms, that she contrived a plan to scale the walls, and get into the prison, by climbing a tree which stood near. She leaped down from the top of the wall into the yard of the female apartment, and secreted herself among the rubbish in the wood-pile. Her female cronies, surprised and gratified to enjoy again the company of their cunning visitor, clandestinely supplied her with food, whenever they found opportunity. In this manner she lived four or five days, thieving whenever she could, and finally took up her lodging in an old ash-hole, or oven. The matron had missed provisions and other articles, and was puzzled to account for the loss. A general search was made, when the warden, on removing some pieces of refuse stove pipe under the oven, discovered the once fair face of *Abby*, peering through the sooty canopy, and she was again in the clutches of the law. No one, however, seemed willing to indict her for the novel crime of breaking *into* a prison, and she was sentenced for *theft* to the county jail for one year. There she served out her time and was released, but soon after she broke into a dwelling, and appropriated to herself a pair of panta-



loons, containing in the pockets \$500, besides other articles, for which she is now in jail awaiting her trial, and will probably soon be an inmate at her old quarters, the prison.

A life convict, *John Brown*, alias *George DeWolf*, is imprisoned for the murder of a woman in Coventry, Ct. The woman was found near the house, cut and mangled in a most horrid manner, and for a long time no trace could be found of the murderer. At length suspicion began to be entertained that some member of the family had committed the deed. The husband of the murdered woman felt the imputed suspicion so keenly, that his anxiety of mind induced him to furnish his sons with means to travel in various directions, and in every possible way to ferret out the murderer. After a patient search for many months, they found in Tolland county jail this man, who had formerly lived in the family. The evidence of his guilt was very conclusive, but the common plea of *insanity* divided the jurors in their verdict of murder in the first degree, and in the second degree he was sentenced for life. During his trial officers from New York appeared with a requisition for him on a charge of murdering his wife in that state, and public opinion, sustained by evidence, brands him

as a blood thirsty wretch. Since his confinement, he at first feigned insanity, but a few thorough trimmings by the officers, effectually cured him of his tricks, and he now readily performs his allotted tasks.

DAILY ROUTINE OF DUTY PERFORMED AT THE CONNECTICUT STATE PRISON BY ITS OFFICERS.

At daylight the bell is rung for the officers, who immediately repair to the guard-room. When it is sufficiently light, the deputy warden gives the signal for manning the walls, and the overseers take their keys, go to their several divisions, and again wait the signal, when they unlock, and march their men, with the lock step, to their respective shops. The convicts immediately commence work, and also begin at a given point in the shop to wash, which each man does in regular order before the breakfast hour.

At 7 o'clock the bell is rung for breakfast, the convicts stop work, form into a line in their shops, and wait the signal of the bell, when they are marched into the prison yard, and form a line in front of their buckets. At the word *right*, each man turns to the right; the word *up* is given, and each man takes his bucket upon his left arm, when

they form into sections in close order, as marched from the shops; and at the word *forward*, they march in the same manner to the hall, where they are seated to hear the reading of the Bible and attend prayers. From thence they are marched around the cells, take their kids containing their breakfast as they pass the kitchen, and are immediately locked up. Each officer then reports the number of men in his charge to the deputy warden, who, finding it right, gives the signal of All's well; the watchmen leave the wall and repair to the guard-room; all the officers then go to their meal, except one in the hall, and one in the guard-room, who are relieved in turn.

From half to three quarters of an hour is allowed, when they are again, as above, marched to their work, and there remain till twelve o'clock; the signal is again given, they are again marched upon a line, and in the same manner marched into and around the hall, the same as at breakfast with the exception of service. Time allowed for dinner, one hour in summer, and forty-five minutes in winter. At one o'clock they are again marched to their shops, and work till six P. M., when they again form a line in front of their buckets; the word is given, "one pace in the rear, march," each convict steps

one pace back; the officer having charge of each division commences searching, by passing his hands over the arms, body, and legs of the prisoner, and as each man is searched he steps to the front. When all are again in a line, the word is given to *uncover*, and each convict takes the cover from his night bucket; the officers pass and examine them; the words, *cover — right — up — forward*; and they march to the hall, attend prayers, and to their cells, as in the morning. The officer then in the hall lights up, examines each lock and door, recounts the convicts, and reports the number to the warden or deputy warden. At half past seven the signal is given, and each convict retires to his bed; the officer again examines the doors, sees that all are abed, and is then relieved by the overseer, taking the first tour, which continues from half past seven to eleven o'clock. He is then relieved by a watchman, who takes what is called the middle tour, from eleven o'clock to half past two; the watchman taking the morning tour, or from half past two till light, relieves him. The above officers are required, while doing duty, to be constantly on their feet, marching around the cells and upon the galleries to see that all is quiet and in good order. If any sickness or disorder takes place,

he calls the watchman, who acquaints the warden or deputy warden, who immediately repair to the hall, and take the necessary measures for relief of the sick or the suppression of disorder.

#### DUTIES OF THE SUBORDINATE OFFICERS.

Deputy warden takes the principal charge of the internal affairs under the direction of the warden; spends the whole day in visiting the several shops and departments; sees that every officer performs his duty; attends to the wants and complaints of the convicts; and has a constant supervision of all the internal operations.

The Clerk assists the warden in keeping the books and other writing; attends generally to the transportation of convicts from the county jails; and when not thus engaged, performs such other duties as are required of him by the warden.

The Overseers, after performing the duty of marching the convicts, as above described, to their shops, remain constantly in them, with their men. They are not allowed to sit down, but must not only remain on their feet, but also exercise the utmost vigilance in seeing that their men work diligently, in order and silence. In case of sickness or disobedience, they are required to send



immediately for the warden or his deputy; they also report in writing, before nine o'clock, A. M., all who express a wish to see the physician.

The Matron and her assistant have charge of the female department of convicts. Those employed in the cooking are unlocked by the matron at four o'clock A. M., and are employed in cooking and washing, under the constant and immediate supervision and direction of the matron, who attends personally to the weighing, measuring, and dividing of the daily rations. After the labors of the day, they are assembled for religious service and instruction, immediately after which they return to their cells, and are locked in by the matron.

The Watchmen are employed, *all the time*, in duty upon the walls, in the guard-room and hall, hospital, and in waiting upon spectators who visit the prison; they are not allowed to sit, read or write, while upon any post of duty.

The Gate-keeper has the care of the gate leading into the yard, and takes charge of the out-door hands and work.

The convicts have at all times free and unrestrained access to the warden, and can, whenever they wish, see and converse with the directors, or director, when they visit the prison, but not in

presence of other convicts. All punishments are inflicted by the warden or his deputy. No subordinate officer is allowed to leave the prison day or night, without permission of the warden, or in his absence, the deputy warden.

#### DAILY RATIONS.

One pound salt beef three days in the week.

Three-quarters of a pound of pork one day in the week.

Three-quarters of a pound of fish one day in the week.

One pound of fresh meat with vegetables, made into a soup, one day in the week.

One pound of bread made of rye flour and corn meal for breakfast and dinner. Five bushels potatoes to each hundred rations.

Thirty-five pounds of corn meal and six quarts of molasses made into mush for supper, to each hundred rations.

One gill of vinegar and a sufficient quantity of salt and pepper per week.

The rations are varied according to the season and other circumstances.

*FINIS.*



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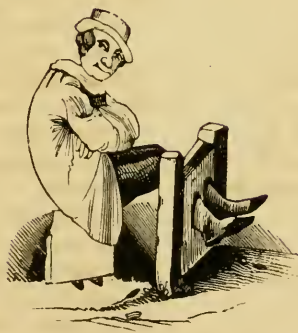
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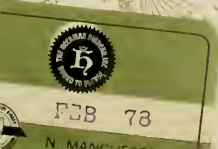












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